

# DIY: Sealing Your Attic Hatch

**Priority:** High

**Difficulty Level:** Moderate - Requires basic measuring, cutting, and simple hand tools.

**Time Commitment:** Takes about 45 to 60 minutes to complete.

**Physical Requirements:** Involves working overhead on a stepladder and lifting the hatch panel.

## Purpose

The purpose of sealing an attic hatch is to stop conditioned indoor air from escaping like a chimney into your unheated attic space, which significantly lowers your heating and cooling costs.

- Stop the chimney effect: Blocks hot air from rising out of your living space into the attic during winter.
- Eliminate drafts: Prevents cold or hot air drafts from dropping down through the ceiling opening.
- Block dust and allergens: Keeps attic fiberglass fibers, dust, and insulation particles out of your home.
- Lower utility bills: Directly reduces the workload on your HVAC system year-round.

## Indicators that this Action is worth doing in your home

- You can see light or feel air coming in from the attic hatch opening in your ceiling.

## Videos

[How to seal and insulate your attic hatch](#)

[Why Attic Insulation Matters for Your Energy Costs](#)

## Materials needed

- Rigid foam board insulation: Creates a thermal barrier on top of the hatch door.
- Adhesive (Foam-compatible): Glues the rigid foam board to the back of the hatch.
- Weatherstripping (Foam or vinyl): Seals the perimeter rim where the hatch rests.
- Hook-and-eye latches: Pulls the hatch down tight against the weatherstripping to lock the seal.
- Utility knife: Cuts the foam board insulation to the exact size of the hatch door.
- Tape measure: Gauges the dimensions of the hatch door and the frame opening.

## Directions

- Remove the hatch panel: Push the hatch door up into the attic, tilt it, and carefully bring it down into the living room.
- Insulate the back of the panel: Measure the hatch panel, cut 2 to 4 layers of rigid foam board to match, and glue them securely to the attic side of the door.
- Install weatherstripping on the ledge: Wipe down the wooden rim/stop inside the ceiling opening and apply sticky-backed foam tape all the way around the perimeter.
- Put the hatch back: Lift the newly insulated panel back up through the hole and rest it flat on top of the new weatherstripping.
- Install latches (highly recommended): Screw hook-and-eye latches or heavy-duty cabinet latches onto the casing to compress the hatch down firmly onto the foam tape seal.

## Tips

- Aim for high R-value: Stack enough rigid foam board layers to reach roughly 5 to 10 inches thick, matching the insulation depth of the rest of your attic floor.
- Create an insulation dam: If you have loose-fill fiberglass or cellulose insulation, install a wooden board barrier around the opening so insulation does not fall into your house when you open the hatch.
- Check the seal tightness: Sit inside a dark room with the attic lights turned on; if you see any light leaking through the edges of the hatch, the seal is not compressed enough.
- Consider pre-made zippered covers: If you have pull-down attic stairs instead of a simple lift-out hatch panel, buy an insulated, zippered attic tent box that staples directly over the stair frame.