

## ASK TOM

### Exterior Caulking

By Tom Mrakas

This week I will be answering a question I received from a reader via email, about how to remove and replace exterior caulking, and which product to use to achieve the best results.

Let's start first with the tools you will need.

To do this kind of job you will need to have on hand a utility knife, putty knife, pliers, a dust brush (note: old, clean paint brushes work just as well as a dust brush), a caulking gun, and, depending on the state of the caulking you wish to remove, you might need a heat gun.

Once you have your tools you're ready to begin.

To start, gently run your utility knife down the edges of the caulking, being very careful not to scrape the window or door. As you move along the brick removing the caulking, you don't need to be as careful as there's less chance of doing any damage. Once you cut along the edges, try to lift a piece up with a putty knife as if trying to remove a sticker.

Once you have an edge up, take your pliers and slowly pull up or down to remove the caulking.

If the old caulking isn't too dry, you might be able to get most of it off with the pliers. If there are still pieces left behind, you will have to use your putty knife to scrape it off ? again being careful not to damage your windows and doors.

If it sounds very labour intensive ? it is. Sorry, folks, there is no easy way to remove old caulking. It takes time and elbow grease.

You can use a heat gun to soften up the caulking to allow for easier removal; however, a word of caution - just be careful not to overheat it as it will melt and make a bigger mess!

Before you apply new caulking, you must make sure you have removed all the old caulking and dusted the area. Once the area is completely clean, then you are ready to caulk.

If you hold the caulking gun at a 45 degree angle to the corner, it will run a nice straight bead along the trim, while the caulking is pushed into all the irregularities of the brick.

The trick to caulking against brick is to grip the gun toward the front, and with the same hand, use the trim or edge of the window or door frame as a straightedge to guide your hand.

While doing this, keep the nozzle away from the brick so that it doesn't ?bump? on the bricks. Try not to stop and start- do an entire side at a time, only stopping if you need to wipe the tip.

If the nozzle gets goopy, wipe it clean with a moist paper towel and continue. Don't caulk with goop around the tip of the nozzle- it makes a mess out of your bead.

Now, the last part of the question asked is the best type of caulking. I would suggest using LePage QUAD Advanced Formula Sealant. This is the product that I use all the time and have been pleased with the results.

So there you go ? how to remove old caulking and replace it ? all in one afternoon!

So until next week, remember a good job, is a job well done! Also, if you have any questions you can reach me at

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