

How to Remove Silicone Caulking

A common complaint amongst many homeowners is the black mildew that grows along the edges of tiles in bathtubs and showers. Bathrooms are the ideal nesting ground for mildew because mildew spores thrive on the constant moisture. Because of this stubborn and unsightly growth, many people want to remove the old silicone caulking and replace it with new, mildew resistant caulking. This task may be time consuming, but it's easy enough for the beginner do-it-yourselfer. Read the steps listed below and learn about how you can remove silicone caulking in your bathroom.

Here's what you need:

- Knife
- Flour
- Water
- Gloves

Here's what you do:

1. Put on the gloves for protection. With a knife or razor blade, cut away at any of the frayed silicone caulking. Splashing water on the caulking will moisten and loosen it, making it easier to cut away.
2. Make a mixture of flour and water, after removing as much of the caulking as you can. The amounts you use will depend on how much caulking you're removing. Start with a cup of flour and several tablespoons of water. Mix the two ingredients, adding more water or flour, until you get a thick paste. Remember to use white flour -- not whole wheat flour. You want a thick, binding paste and whole wheat flour won't give you as thick a consistency.
3. Spread the thick paste over the remaining silicone caulking with your finger.
4. Wait for the mixture to dry and adhere to the caulking.
5. Wash the paste away with water. The caulking has also been washed away, leaving a clean surface for you to apply fresh caulking.

I have had success with WHITE VINEGAR.

It is a mild form of acetic acid which is the main solvent of silicone.

A little over 20 years ago I made new counter top and back splash for kitchen. Used silicone between top and splash.

About 4 years later wife showed me the silicone was disappearing away. Upon questioning her closely she admitted to using white vinegar to clean lime from counter top. (from our mineralized water) Got her to stop using vinegar and the disappearing of the silicone stopped. Later I used it to clean bottom of shower door track when I replaced a tub, but reused the same shower doors.

Yes, Vinegar works great for removing Silicone Caulk.

But nobody mentioned the SECRET.....

Most store bought White Vinegar is only 5%.

In larger grocers you can hunt around on the shelves in the canning and pickling area and find some 9% Vinegar, or in the cleaning aisle, usually bottom shelf. The brand I find most often at 9% is Heinz Pickling Vinegar.

If not there, check hardware stores like Ace Hardware or Mom n Pop hardware stores. The Big Box stores rarely carry the better grades of anything they normally keep in stock!

As a last resort, hit the winery for bottled sour grapes, (wine that turned to vinegar) hi hi.....

If you're looking for strong acetic acid (the acid in Vinegar), go to a photographic supply store and buy what they call "stop" it is concentrated acetic acid that is used to stop the photo developing process.

How to Remove Silicone Caulk

Whether you are replacing the **silicone caulk** in your bathroom as a result of remodelling or mould and mildew growth, it is essential that you completely remove it and clean the surface. Residual amounts of silicone caulk will prevent the replacement caulk from sealing correctly. Take your time and work thoroughly through the instructions below for the best results.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Caulk Remover
- Utility Knife
- Caulking Removal Tool
- Putty Knife
- Needle-Nosed Pliers
- Bleach
- Water
- Old Toothbrush
- Silicone Caulk

Step 1 – Soften Caulk

Clean the area thoroughly first to ensure that there is no dirt or soap barrier preventing the chemicals from working on the caulk. This will also make it easier for you to see what you are doing once you begin removing the caulk. Apply caulk remover to the caulk that you intend to remove, following the manufacturer's instructions on how long to leave it before moving on to the next step.

Step 2 – Cut Away Caulk

Once the caulk remover has had time to soften the caulk, use the utility knife (a fresh blade is recommended) to cut through it. In some cases this cutting will cause the caulk to fall out of the joint easily. However, if the caulking is very thick or there is more than one layer, you may need to use the pliers to pull it out.

Step 3 – Remove Residual Caulk

Any chunks of caulk that remain can be scraped out using a caulking removal tool or putty knife. Use implements very carefully to prevent damage to the surrounding materials. A plastic putty knife can be very effective and is unlikely to cause any scratching to bathroom fixtures. If you are using a metal tool, take your time and apply a gentle pressure to remove the caulking in thin layers. This method reduces the risk that you will lose control of the tool. Also, it can be helpful to apply pressure in only one direction rather than sawing at the caulk. If necessary, you can use water as a lubricant.

Step 4 – Cleaning

In order to obtain the best seal on the finished job, you need to thoroughly clean the joint where you will re-caulk. Use an old toothbrush to apply a mixture of 1 part bleach to 3 parts water to the area and scrub it thoroughly. This will ensure that there is no dirt or mildew left behind. If small amounts of caulk are still present, you can use rubbing alcohol or acetone on a rag to remove them. Make sure that the surfaces are completely dry before you move on to the next step.

Step 5 – Re-Caulking

When the area is completely clear of the old silicone caulk, you can apply the new product. Use caulk with mildew protection or fungicide to prevent unsightly build-up and maintain good condition for longer. Frequent cleaning to prevent a build-up of soap residue is also recommended to ensure that the product lasts for the longest possible time. When applying the new caulk, wipe off any misplaced caulk quickly before it begins to cure.

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