

How to avoid CONDENSATION

These three steps will help you reduce the condensation in your home.

1 Produce less moisture

Some ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly.

- Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- Avoid using paraffin and portable flueless bottled gas heaters as these heaters put a lot of moisture into the air.
- Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on.
- Vent any tumble dryer on the outside, unless it is the self-condensing type. DIY kits are available for this.

2 Ventilate to remove moisture

You can ventilate your home without making draughts.

- Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room.
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider. Or better still, use a humidistat-controlled electric fan. These come on automatically when the air becomes humid, and are cheap to run.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan. A door closer is advisable, as this will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.

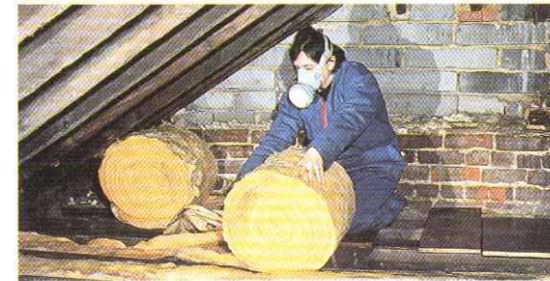


- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid putting too many things in them as this stops the air circulating. Cut a ventilation slot in the back of each shelf or use slatted shelves. Cut 'breather' holes in doors and in the back of wardrobes and leave space between the back of the wardrobe and the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- If you replace your window units at any time, make sure that the new frames incorporate trickle ventilators.

3 Insulate, draughtproof and heat your home

Insulation and draughtproofing will help keep your home warm and will also cut fuel bills. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely.

- Insulate your loft. Remember to draughtproof the loft hatch but do not block the opening under the eaves.



- Consider cavity wall insulation. Before deciding though, you should talk to your local building inspector as building regulations approval is required.
- Consider secondary and double glazing of windows to reduce heat loss and draughts but you must ensure that there is some ventilation.
- In cold weather, keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no one at home.

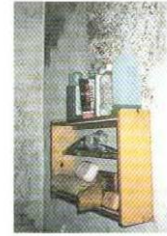
Some words of warning:

- Do not block permanent ventilators
- Do not completely block chimneys. Instead, leave a hole about two bricks in size and fit a louvered grille over it
- Do not draughtproof rooms where there is condensation or mould
- Do not draughtproof a room where there is a cooker or a fuel burning heater, for example, a gas fire
- Do not draughtproof windows in the bathroom and kitchen

First steps against MOULD

- First treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not reappear.
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness.



What is CONDENSATION ?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry, it does not leave a 'tidemark'. It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.

Is it CONDENSATION ?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. It can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe
- Rising damp due to a defective damp-course or because there is no damp-course

These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark'.

If your home is newly built it may be damp because the water used during its construction (for example, in plaster) is still drying out.

If your home is damp for any of these reasons it may take weeks of heating and ventilation to dry out. Hiring a dehumidifier will help.

If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes, then it is probably condensation.



Is your home damp? Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and make timber window frames rot. Damp housing encourages the growth of mould and mites, and can increase the risk of respiratory illness.

Some damp is caused by condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, so reducing the risk of dampness and mould growth.

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USEFUL INFORMATION

- Useful information on effective ways to heat and insulate your home can be obtained from the Energy Savings Trust (Tel. 0345 277 200).
- If you are a householder who receives a qualifying income or disability related benefits, or are aged 60 or over, you may be eligible for a grant for the installation of a major insulation measure such as draughtproofing, loft insulation, or cavity wall insulation, under the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme.
- For information on grants under the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme, contact EAGA Limited, Freepost, PO Box 130, Newcastle upon Tyne NE99 2RP (Free phone 0800 072 0150).
- If you are an owner-occupier or private tenant, are aged 60 or over, are disabled or infirm, or if you receive benefits, you may be eligible for home repair assistance to help you carry out insulation, draughtproofing or heating works.
- If dampness has caused window frames in your home to rot, you can treat the wood with preservatives. A leaflet entitled, 'Wood Preservatives in your Home', gives valuable advice on the use of these chemicals. The leaflet is available from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, L23 7NB (Tel. 0870 1226 236, Fax 0870 1226 237). It is important to remember, however, that the only lasting remedy for wood rot is to cure the damp which caused it in the first place.
- A helpful video, produced by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and called 'Condensation in the Home', is available at your local council office.

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- 'Tackling Condensation', a more comprehensive guide to the causes, diagnosis and remedies of condensation, is available for purchase from BRE, Garston, Watford WD2 7JR. Telephone numbers for specific interests and enquiries are as follows:
BRE Bookshop (BRE publications) - 01923 664444
General and technical advice - 01923 664664
- Information on home repair assistance and application forms are available from your local housing authority.
- If you are a local authority tenant and wish to receive financial help with any remedial work, you should approach your local council direct.
- If you are elderly, disabled or on a low income, you may be able to get independent advice and practical help in carrying out the work from a home improvement agency if there is one operating in your area. Further information about home improvement agencies can be obtained from Care Repair England Ltd. (Tel. 0115 979 9091).

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or send your name and address on a postcard to:

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CV37 9BR

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Keep your home free from

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