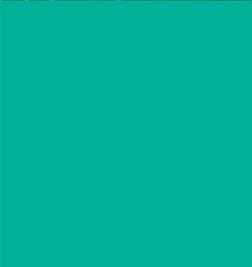
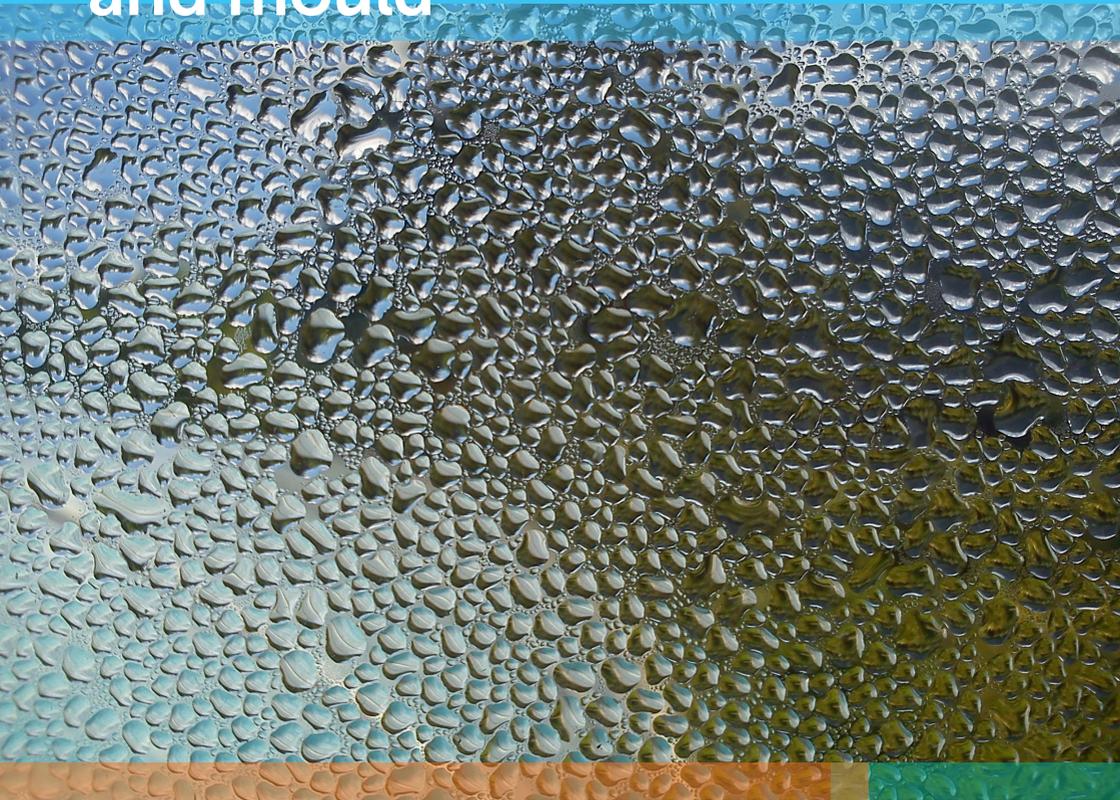


Your guide to:

Controlling condensation and mould



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What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If air gets cold it cannot hold all the moisture produced by everyday activities. Some will appear as tiny droplets of water. This is condensation.



Make sure you look for condensation in your home. It can appear on or near windows, in corners and, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards.

Condensation forms on cold surfaces and places where there is little movement of air. It is most noticeable on windows on a cold morning, and can also be seen on mirrors when you have a bath or shower, and on cold surfaces such as tiles or walls.

Condensation occurs in cold weather, even when it is dry. It doesn't always leave a tidemark on walls. If there is a tidemark, this dampness might have another cause, such as water leaking into your home from a plumbing fault, loose roof tile or rising damp.

Problems that can be caused by excessive condensation

Dampness caused by excessive condensation can lead to mould growth on walls and furniture, mildew on clothes and other fabrics. Also, damp humid conditions provide an environment in which house dust mites can easily multiply.

First steps against condensation

You will need to take proper steps to deal with condensation. In the meantime, there are some simple things you should do straight away:

- Dry your windows and window sills every morning, as well as kitchen or bathroom surfaces that have become wet
- Wring out the cloth afterwards instead of drying on a radiator
- Open curtains and blinds every morning
- Open windows or use an extractor fan when cooking or having a bath or shower



First steps against mould growth

You should first treat the mould already in your home and then deal with the basic problem of condensation to stop mould reappearing.

To kill and remove mould, wipe down or spray walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) approval number, and follow the instructions for safe use. These fungicidal washes are often available at local supermarkets and DIY stores.



Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Do not try to remove mould by using a brush or vacuum. After treatment, redecorate using good quality fungicidal paint and an fungal-resistant wallpaper paste to prevent mould reoccurring. The effects of anti-fungal or anti-condensation paint is destroyed if covered with ordinary paint or wallpaper.

Remember: the only lasting cure for severe mould is to get rid of the dampness caused by condensation.

What causes condensation?

There are four main factors that cause condensation:



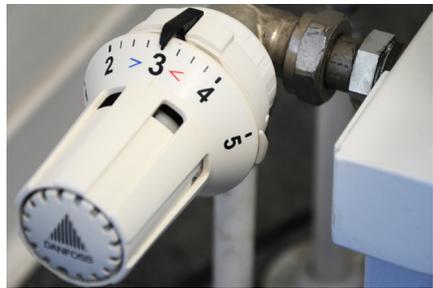
Too much moisture being produced in your home



Not enough ventilation



Cold surfaces



The temperature of your home

You need to look at all of these factors and use appropriate measures to cure or reduce a condensation problem.

Excessive moisture in your home

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even breathing adds some moisture (as when you breathe on cold windows and mirrors, fogging them up.) One sleeping person adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and double that when active during the day.

Below is an example of how much extra water (humidity) can be produced in one day in a typical home:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Two people at home | = 3 pints |
| A bath or shower | = 2 pints |
| Drying clothes indoors | = 9 pints |
| Cooking / using a kettle | = 6 pints |
| Washing dishes | = 2 pints |
| Total moisture in a day | = 22 pints |



To help reduce moisture and condensation:

- Dry your washing outside if possible, or hang it in the bathroom over an airer with the window slightly open or an extractor fan on. Don't put it on radiators, in front of a radiant heaters, or hanging over internal doors.
- Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen, as it will produce moisture when burning. You may notice your windows misting over.
- Ensure tumble driers are vented correctly outside, unless you have a condensing type, for which you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations for use
- When filling your bath always run the cold first then add the hot - this will reduce the steam by 90% which leads to condensation.
- Cook with pan lids on, and turn the heat down once water has boiled. Only use the minimum amount of water for cooking vegetables.

Ventilation of your home

Ventilation can help to reduce condensation by removing moist air from your home and replacing it with drier air from outside.

Help to reduce condensation that has built up overnight by 'cross-ventilating' your home. Open a small window to the first notch downstairs and another upstairs. They should be on the opposite sides of the house, or diagonally opposite if in a flat. At the same time, open the interior room doors to allow drier air to circulate through your home. Cross-ventilation should be carried out for about 30 minutes each day.

Ensure that accessible windows won't cause a security problem and remember to close them when you go out.

Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom for about 20 minutes after use by opening a small top window, or use an extractor fan if possible - they are cheap to run and very effective. Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent any moisture escaping into the rest of your house.

Ventilate your bedroom by leaving a window slightly open at night, or use your trickle vents if fitted (again, remember to stay secure)



To reduce the risk of mildew on clothes and other stored items, allow air to circulate round them by removing false wardrobe backs or drilling breather holes in them. Keep a small gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls, and where possible place wardrobes and furniture against internal walls. Pull shelves away from the back of wardrobes and cupboards. Never overfill rooms, wardrobes and cupboards, as it restricts air circulation

Cold surfaces in your home

Condensation forms more easily on cold surfaces in your home such as walls, ceilings and windows. In many cases, those surfaces can be made warmer by improving the insulation and draught proofing.

However, please remember not to:

- Draught-proof rooms with a condensation problem, or where there is a heater or cooker that burns gas or solid fuel
- Block permanent ventilators or airbricks installed for heating or heating appliances
- Draught-proof bathroom or kitchen windows



The temperature of your home

The warmer air is, the more moisture it will hold. Heating one room to a high temperature and leaving other rooms cold makes condensation worse in the unheated rooms. That means that it is better to have a medium-to-low level of heat throughout the house.



Keeping the heating on low all day in cold weather will help control condensation, but keep a check on your meters to see how much it is costing you. Maintaining a consistent temperature throughout the day may be cheaper than constantly heating a cold house to your desired temperature.

Also be careful not to over-ventilate your home when it is cold. It will cause the temperature to drop and make condensation more likely, as well as increasing your heating costs.

Key points to remember

-  Reduce the amount of moisture in your home
-  Improve ventilation
-  Open windows to circulate air around your home. This will reduce moisture which causes condensation
-  Reduce the number of cold spots in your home
-  Maintain an adequate temperature
-  Set your thermostat to a temperature between 12 and 21 degrees

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