

## useful contacts

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If you would like this guide to reducing damp & condensation in any other format including large print, audio CD/tape, Braille or translated into another language please telephone 01274 254321.

# Your guide to reducing damp & condensation



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## Your guide to reducing damp & condensation

We've produced this guide to provide you with some simple tips to help you identify different types of damp and condensation within your home. We've also included some guidance on how you can reduce condensation within your home.

### Condensation

Condensation is probably the most common type of damp that occurs in homes and if left untreated can lead to black mould.

Condensation occurs when warm, moist air condenses on cold surfaces throughout the home.

Cold surfaces can include the area around window frames, the top of walls and toilet cisterns. The cold surface cools the air and the water vapour in the air condenses into moisture droplets. Everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes, including bathing, drying clothes and even breathing.

Condensation can look like streaming water or speckled black mould. It gets worse in cold weather and in rooms that are poorly ventilated or unheated.

It can be difficult to manage condensation within your home, particularly during the colder months when your heating costs are higher, however most homes do get condensation and if it is managed well it can improve it.

If condensation goes untreated, speckled black mould will begin to form which can lead to health problems. Basic precautions and maintenance can help control condensation within your home and ensure your household stays healthy.



### Rising damp

Rising damp occurs when water rises up through the walls, which can happen if there is a problem with the damp proof course or if there is no damp proof course installed. This looks like a horizontal 'tide mark' on the wall which is about a metre above floor level. This damp only occurs on the ground floor – the lower part of the wall will be damp and plaster and floorboards may be damp and peeling.



## Damp

There are different kinds of damp within homes these are:

### Penetrating damp

This type of damp is caused by water entering your property, such as a roof leak or through cracks in the outside walls. This damp causes local patches confined to a particular area.



## Preventing condensation in your home

By following the simple steps below you can reduce condensation by producing less moisture, controlling ventilation and heating your home effectively.

### Reduce excessive moisture production

A lot of activities within the home produce moisture. Controlling moisture production can help reduce condensation within your home.

### General tips

- ▶ Try to dry clothes outdoors if possible or in the bathroom with the window open and internal door closed
- ▶ If you have a tumble dryer vent them through exterior walls if they are not newer condenser versions
- ▶ Wipe away and mop up any moisture on walls, windows, window sills and other surfaces using a clean cloth or towel
- ▶ Keep internal doors closed in between moisture producing rooms, the kitchen and bathroom, and the rest of the house, this will help stop moist air circulating

### In the kitchen

- ▶ Use a saucepan lid when cooking - this will reduce the amount of moisture in the air
- ▶ Don't leave pans and kettles boiling for longer than needed, reducing the amount of moisture in the air
- ▶ Keep the internal kitchen door closed and the window slightly open whilst cooking, this will prevent moist air circulating around the house whilst moisture will escape through the open window

## In the bathroom

- ▶ Hot showers create a lot of steam. After your shower, dry the shower area with an old towel to reduce moisture in the air. If you don't have an extractor fan, open the window for an hour or so to get rid of the remaining moisture. Close your bathroom door so that the damp air doesn't spread to the rest of your house.

## Ventilation

Condensation can be reduced by ventilating your property well, which will improve the air quality within your home. If it isn't ventilated properly stale air and moisture will build up and increase the risk of condensation and mould.

If your home has additional insulation, including cavity wall or external wall insulation, it's even more important to allow fresh air into your property. This is why we suggest opening trickle vents on windows and not blocking up any air bricks that allow air flow within your property.

The following tips will help ventilate your property:

- ▶ Open trickle vents on windows or open windows if you do not have these
- ▶ Use your extractor fan in your kitchen and bathroom if you have one installed
- ▶ Don't block airbricks or window vents
- ▶ Leaving a space between furniture and the wall allows air to circulate and will decrease the risk of surface condensation and mould

## Heating

Try to maintain a low level background heat for all rooms, especially during cold weather. It's better not to turn your radiators off completely, but turn your thermostatic radiator valves down to low or frost setting in unused rooms.

Closing the door to an unused, cooler room will also help keep your home warmer and restrict the movement of moisture into this colder room.

Opening your curtains and blinds during daylight hours can help warm your house, especially on sunny days. It will also allow moisture to be vented through trickle vents or open windows.

Remember that propane gas and paraffin heaters produced excessive moisture, which can lead to big problems with condensation and mould.

## What if mould forms?

Remember to wipe down surfaces that attract condensation and mould regularly. Mould can be removed with a fungicidal mould remover which can be applied to the affected area. Fungicidal mould remover can be obtained from most DIY stores and supermarkets.

## Re-decorating tips

It is best to use paint rather than wallpaper in rooms affected by condensation and mould as it is easier to clean and repair. Anti-mould paint can be used which should help prevent mould growth.