

Points to remember

Produce less moisture

- Cover pans.
- Dry your clothes outdoors.
- Vent your tumble dryer to the outside.
- Avoid using paraffin or flueless bottled-gas heaters.

Ventilate to remove moisture

- Open the windows when someone is in.
- When using the kitchen and bathroom open the windows wider, use the fan and shut the door.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes.



Insulate and draughtproof

- Insulate the loft.
- Draughtproof windows and external doors.

Heat your home a little more

- If possible, keep low background heat on all day.
- Ask the social security office about benefits, rebates and help with fuel bills.

Venting a tumble dryer

If you are a council tenant and need your tumble dryer venting to the outside, you should contact the Council. We will do the work free of charge as long as it is practically possible.

Further help

If you are still concerned about dampness or condensation in your home contact the Council's housing repair and maintenance service.

Keep Your Home Free From Damp and Mould

Is your home damp?

Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture, and make timber window frames rot. It also encourages the growth of mould which can increase the risk of illnesses that affect your breathing, throat and lungs. 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.



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 rainy 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, and in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.

First steps against condensation

You will need to deal properly with the condensation, but meanwhile there are some simple things you can do today. Wipe down the windows and sills every morning. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator. This helps to stop window frames rotting and damp forming under sills.

First steps against mould

First treat the mould already in your home. If you then deal with the cause of condensation, mould should not return. To kill and remove mould, wipe walls and window frames with a fungicidal (mould-killing) wash. Check that it carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'. Follow the maker's instructions precisely. Dry-clean mildewed clothes, and shampoo your carpets. Brushing or vacuum cleaning the mould can increase the risk of breathing problems because it sends mould spores into the air.

After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould. Note that this paint won't work if you then cover it with ordinary paint or wallpaper. The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to get rid of all the dampness.

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
- water spilling from a blocked gutter
- water getting in around window frames
- 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 damp for any of these reasons, it may take weeks of heating and ventilating to dry out.

Using a dehumidifier (which draws moisture from the room) will help.

How to avoid condensation

These four 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.

Cooking To reduce the amount of moisture, cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.

Heaters Do not use paraffin heaters and portable bottled-gas heaters with no flue as they put a lot of moisture into the air - one gallon of gas or paraffin produces about a gallon of water vapour.

Washing clothes Put washing outdoors to dry if you can. Or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on. If you have a tumble dryer, make sure you vent it to the outside (unless it is the self-condensing type). DIY kits are available for this.

2. Ventilate to remove the moisture

You can ventilate your home without making draughts. Some ventilation is needed to get rid of moisture being produced all the time, including that from people's breath. Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open (small vent in the frame of the window) when someone is in the room.

You need much more ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom when cooking, washing up, bathing and drying clothes. This means opening the windows wider. If a humidistat-controlled electric fan is installed, use it. (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. Doing this will help stop the moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to suffer 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 the back of wardrobes. Leave space between the back of the wardrobe and the wall.

Put floor-mounted furniture on blocks to allow air underneath. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls (walls which have a room on both sides) rather than against outside walls.

Use ventilation equipment or fans provided by the council (they are cheap to run)

3. Insulate and draughtproof

Insulation in the loft, cavity-wall insulation and draughtproofing of windows and outside doors will help keep your home warm and you will have lower fuel bills as well.

When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely. Do not remove any insulation that has been installed by the council.

When draughtproofing

- Do not block permanent ventilators.
- Do not completely block chimneys (leave the louvred grille free).
- Do not draughtproof rooms where there is condensation or mould.
- Do not draughtproof a room where there is a fuel-burning heater (for example, a gas fire).
- Do not draughtproof windows in the bathroom and kitchen.

4. Heat your home a little more

In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm enough to avoid condensation is to keep low background heating on all day, even when everyone is out.

This is very important in flats and bungalows where the bedrooms are not above a warm living room.

Dehumidifiers will help dry out damp. They can also help reduce condensation in warm rooms with a lot of moisture, but they are of little use in cold damp rooms.

