

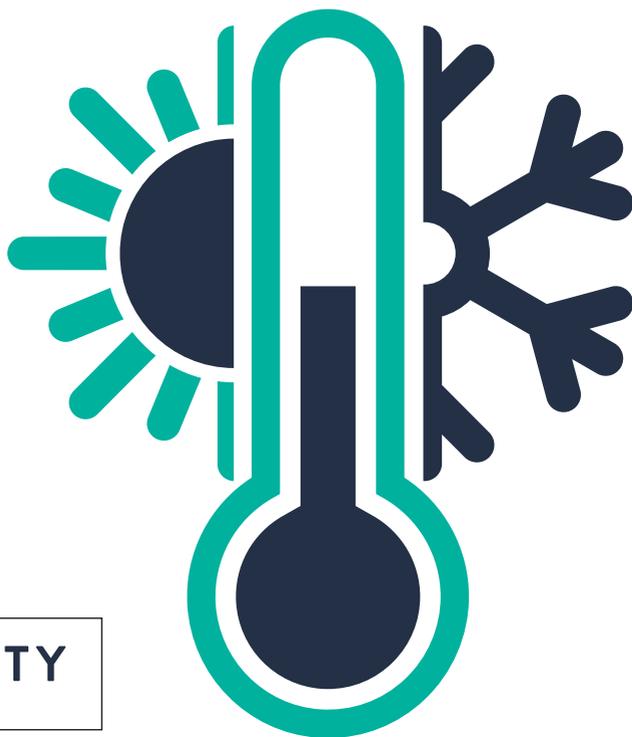


Helping us to help you

Controlling damp, condensation and mould

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What is condensation

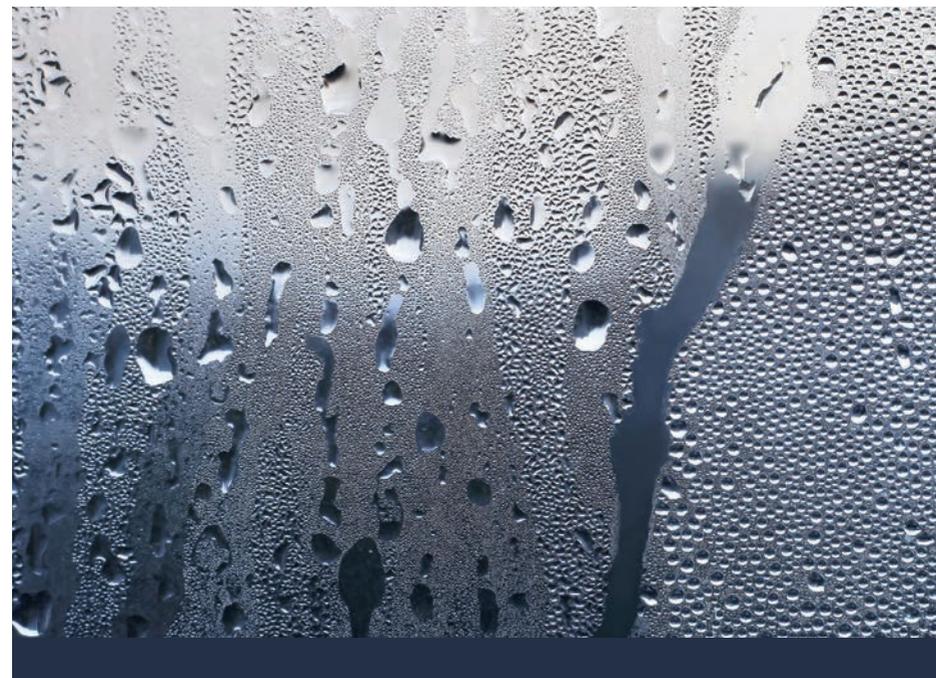
Did you know that there is always some moisture in the air, even if you can not see it.

If air gets cold, it cannot hold all of the moisture produced by everyday activities and some of this moisture appears as tiny droplets of water, most noticeable on windows on a cold morning.

It can also be seen on mirrors when you have a bath or shower and on cold surfaces such as tiles or cold walls.

Condensation occurs in cold weather, even if the weather is dry. It doesn't leave a "tidemark" round its edges on walls. If there is a tidemark, this dampness may have another cause such as water leaking into your home from a plumbing fault, loose roof tile or rising damp.

This is condensation.



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.

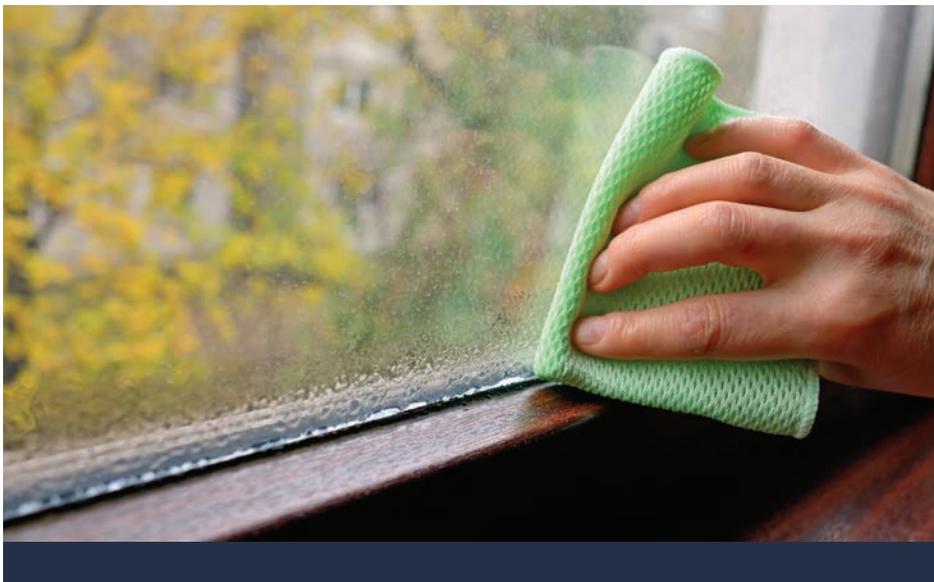
Problems that can be caused by excessive condensation

Dampness caused by excessive condensation can lead to mould growth on walls and furniture, mildew on clothes and other fabrics and the rotting of wooden window frames. Also damp, humid conditions provide an environment in which house dust mites can easily multiply. The presence of mould and dust mites can make existing respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis worse.

First steps against condensation

You will need to take proper steps to deal with condensation but there are some simple things you can do straight away.

- Dry your windows and windowsills every morning.
- Dry any surfaces in the kitchen or bathroom that have become wet.
- Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.



First steps against mould growth

First **treat the mould** already in your home then deal with the basic **problem of condensation** to stop mould reappearing.

1. 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”. Make sure you follow the instructions for its safe use. You can find fungicidal washes at DIY stores and in some supermarkets.
2. **DO NOT** try to remove mould by using a brush or vacuum cleaner.
3. Dry-clean mildewed clothes.
4. Shampoo carpets
5. After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint and a fungicidal resistant wallpaper paste to prevent mould from reoccurring. The effect of fungicidal or anti-condensation paint is destroyed if covered with ordinary paint or wallpaper.



But remember, the only lasting cure for severe mould is to get rid of the cause of the 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 to cure a condensation problem.

Moisture produced in your home

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even breathing adds some moisture! (Think about breathing on cold windows or mirrors to fog them up.)

Did you know that one person adds 1/2 pint of water to the air overnight and twice that rate when active during the day?

To give you some idea of how much extra water this could be in a day, here are a few examples:

Two people at home for 16 hours		3 pints
A bath or shower		2 pints
Drying clothes indoors		9 pints
Cooking and using a kettle		6 pints
Washing dishes		2 pints
Using a bottled gas heater (8 hours)		4 pints
Total moisture		26 pints (14.8lrs)

Simple steps to reduce moisture



Laundry

- If possible, hang washing outside to dry.
- If you have to dry clothes indoor, hang them in the bathroom with the door closed and the window slightly open. If you have an extractor fan, switch it on.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is properly vented to the outside (through the wall or with a flexible hose through a window). Consider getting a condensing dryer which collects water in a separate container.
- Do not dry clothes on a radiator.



Heating

- Avoid the use of bottled gas heaters – they produce about 8 pints of moisture from an average sized gas cylinder.
- Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen.



Cooking

- Always cook with the lid on the pan.
- Turn down the heat as soon as the water has boiled.
- Only use the minimum amount of water for cooking vegetables.
- Open a window when cooking or washing up.
- If you have a cooker hood or extractor fan, this may help to remove moist air.
- Close your kitchen door when using the room for 20 minutes or more.



Bathing

- Run the hot and cold water at the same time to minimise steam.
- Keep a window slightly open when having a bath or shower.
- If you have an extractor fan in the bathroom, switch it on when you are bathing.
- Close your bathroom door when using the room for 20 minutes or more.

Ventilation of your home

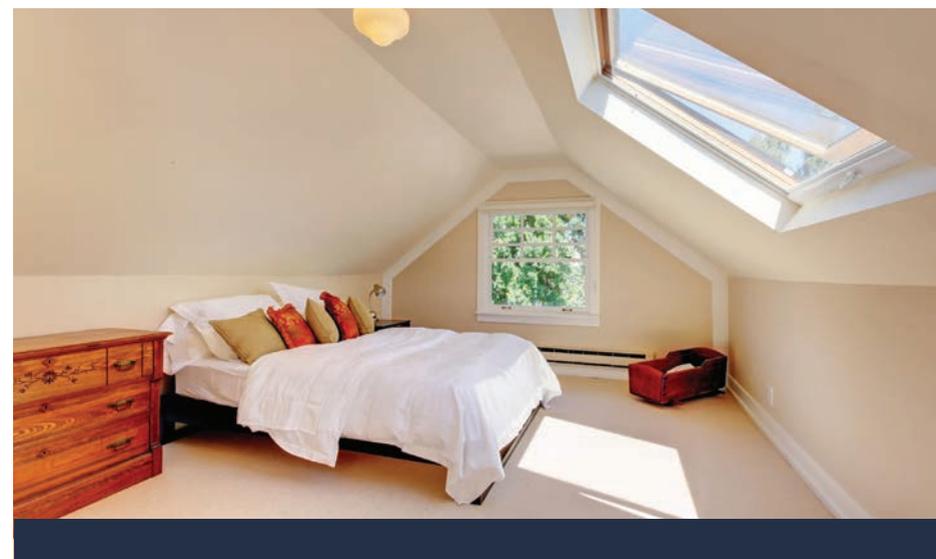
Ventilation can help to **reduce condensation** by removing **moist air** from your home and replacing it with **drier air** from outside.

It is quick and easy to do – just follow these guidelines:

- If you live in a house, try “cross ventilating” it for about 30 minutes a day. This sounds complicated but all you need to do is open an upstairs window slightly and a downstairs windows slightly on the opposite side of the house. Leave interior room doors open and this will allow drier, fresh air to circulate around your home. Make sure that opening a window will not cause you a security problem and remember to close it when you go out.
- Ventilate your kitchen when cooking or washing up.
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent unavoidable moisture escaping into the rest of the house.



- Ventilate your bedroom by leaving a window slightly open at night – be mindful of your security.
- To reduce the risk of mildew on clothes and other stored items, allow air to circulate round them. You can do this by removing “false” backs on wardrobes and cupboards or drilling breather holes in them.
- Keep a small gap between larger pieces of furniture and the walls (if possible, place large items on internal walls).
- Pull shelves away from the backs of wardrobes and never overfill them as it restricts air circulation.
- Make sure air vents are left clear and open, allowing air to circulate and prevent a build up of condensation.



Cold surfaces in your home

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

Insulation and draught proofing will also help keep the whole house warmer, will cut your fuel bills and condensation is less likely to occur.

Loft and wall insulation are the most effective. If you install any draught proofing, make sure that:

- You do not draught proof rooms with a condensation problem (it will be more difficult for drier air to circulate).
- You do not draught proof rooms where there is a heater or cooker that burns gas or solid fuels.
- You do not block permanent ventilators or airbricks installed for heating or heating appliances.
- You do not draught proof bathroom or kitchen windows.



The temperature of your home

Warm air holds more moisture than cooler air which is more likely to deposit droplets of condensation round your home.

Air is like a sponge:- the warmer it is, the more moisture it will hold.

- Heating one room to a high level and leaving others 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.
- An ideal room temperature is between 19-21° C
- Keeping the heating on low all day in cold weather will help to control condensation, but keep a check on your meters to check how much it is costing you.
- Do not warm unheated rooms by leaving the door open to a heated room, as this will cause warm damp air to enter the room and turn to condensation on the cold surfaces.
- To add extra heat to rooms without any form of installed heating, it is better to use electric heaters, for example oil filled radiators or panel heaters, on low settings.
- Remember, you should not use portable bottled gas heaters in homes suffering from condensation as they give out a lot of moisture whilst in use. Believe it or not, it is actually cheaper to heat a room with on-peak electricity than by using bottled gas heaters.
- If you have a freezer, it is a good idea to put it in a space suffering from condensation as they heat from the motor should help to keep condensation at bay.
- Be careful not to over ventilate your home when it is cold as it will cause the temperature inside to drop and make condensation more likely. It will also increase your heating costs.

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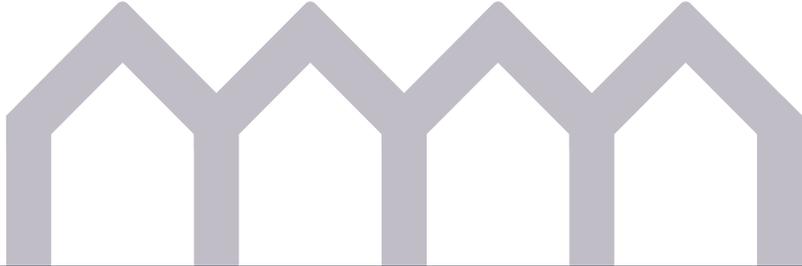
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