

## *Keep your home free from mould and damp*

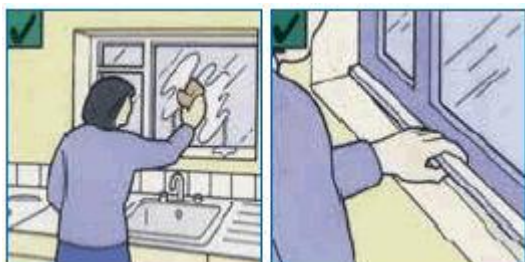


### Is your home damp or is it condensation?

Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and make window frames rot. Damp, cold housing encourages the growth of mould and mites. Mites feed on moulds and both can increase the risk of respiratory illnesses in some people.

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.

## First steps against condensation



You will need to take proper steps to deal with the condensation, but meanwhile there are some measures you can take right away.

Wipe down the windows and cills every morning. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.

Condensation channels and sponge strips can be bought at DIY shops. They are fitted to windows to collect the condensation and thus help prevent window frames from rotting and avoid damp forming under the cills. Care must be taken to fit these devices properly.

## First steps against mould



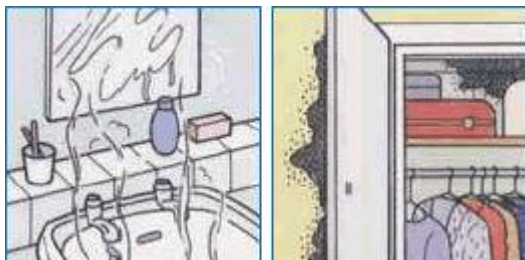
First treat the mould already in your home. If you deal with the basic problem, mould should not reappear.

To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with bleach or 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.

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

## 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 may 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 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.

## How to avoid condensation

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

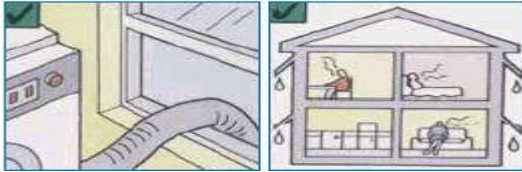
### 1. PRODUCE LESS MOISTURE



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. Paraffin and portable flueless bottled-gas heaters: These heaters put a lot of moisture into the air - one gallon of gas or paraffin produces about a gallon of water. If you have a problem with condensation, try to find alternative means of heating.
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- **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. It is best to fit a fan that can be switched to run continuously for clothes drying. If you have a tumble dryer make sure you vent it to the outside (unless it is the self-condensing type).

## 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 all the time if possible, and especially 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 and turn on extractor fans where provided.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan. It will help to draughtproof these doors. Doing this will help stop the moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.
- Allow space for the air to circulate in and around your furniture. Open doors to ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Leave space between the backs of wardrobes and the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls, i.e. walls which have a room on both sides, rather than against outside walls.



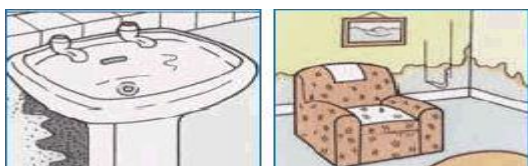
## 3. HEAT YOUR HOME A LITTLE MORE





- 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 there is no-one at home. This is very important in flats and bungalows and other dwellings where the bedrooms are not above a warm living room. If you have central heating set it to provide background warmth in all rooms including unused rooms.

## How to identify damp



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, water penetration around window frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- Rising damp due to a defective or missing damp-course or because there is no dampcourse. These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark' and you should have the necessary repairs carried out to remove the source of damp.

**Contact the Maintenance Office to report any repairs.**

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

If your home is damp for any of these reasons it may take weeks of heating and ventilating to dry out.

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

## Points to remember

Remove mould Reduce moisture:

- Cover pans
- Dry clothes outdoors
- Vent your tumble dryer to the outside

Ventilate to remove moisture:

- Ventilate all the time, especially when someone is in
- Increase ventilation of the kitchen and bathroom when in use and shut the door
- Ventilate cupboards, wardrobes and blocked chimneys



Heat your home a little more:

- If possible, keep low background heat on all day, with background ventilation

Your gas or electricity supply company, Energy Watch and the Post Office can provide advice about budget schemes such as fuel saving stamps that spread the cost of heating. Advisory leaflets are also available from the council offices, libraries, etc.