

Cutting condensation and giving mould the brush off

To help our customers manage condensation we are installing positive input ventilation equipment to homes when we install a new kitchen or bathroom. This equipment continually operates to force moist air out of the home before it has the opportunity to condense on surfaces.

Condensation is a nuisance but it can be avoided and the good news is that it is very rare for it to indicate any kind of building defect. Condensation is particularly common in rooms like kitchens and bathrooms. It happens when warm, moist air reaches cold surfaces like windows or walls. If severe condensation is ignored, it can become a major problem in your home. Fortunately there are some easy steps you can take to cut condensation.

Why you need to cut condensation

Condensation can cause a build-up of moisture on cold surfaces – you might see this on places like window sills. Left unattended, this can produce mould on walls, ceilings, furniture and clothing.

Mould is unpleasant to live with and in extreme conditions can lead to building problems like rotting wood or crumbling plaster.



Easy ways to cut condensation



1. **Keep lids on saucepans when cooking,** to reduce steam in the kitchen.
2. **Try not to dry clothes on radiators or racks indoors.** If you have to do this, use the bathroom. Open a window to allow air to circulate and close the door to that room.
3. **If you use a tumble drier, make sure it is properly vented to an open window or through an outside wall.** Stop moisture spreading through your home. If your dryer has a built-in condenser, make sure that the filter is cleaned and cleared regularly.
4. **When you are cooking or bathing, use an extractor fan or open a window and keep the door closed.** Keep the extractor fan on or the window open for about 20 minutes after you have finished (with the door closed).
5. **Leave trickle vents (the slotted vents in your window frames) open when rooms are occupied** — even in the winter when your heating is on. These vents provide constant ventilation which removes water vapour.
6. **Don't use paraffin or calor gas heaters.**
7. **Leave a gap between your wall and the back of free standing furniture like wardrobes or cupboards.** Try not to overfill cupboards, wardrobes and drawers so that air can circulate around the contents.
8. **When condensation appears,** wipe it away and ventilate the area.
9. **Use moisture traps,** available from most DIY stores, in affected rooms for a big reduction in condensation.

Keeping temperatures constant

Keep your home warm to avoid cold surfaces.

Condensation is worse in buildings which are constantly heating and cooling. The temperature in your home should be between 18-24°C. Using your central heating thermostat to prevent the temperature dropping below 15°C can prevent condensation forming. If your home is unoccupied during the day, use the heating timer to make sure that the house is warm when you get home. During very cold weather it is better to leave the heating on during the day to keep temperatures constant. If you don't usually use all the rooms in your home, you still need to keep them warm, to avoid cold spots.

How to get rid of mould

If you notice mould in your home, you should treat it straight away to stop it from spreading and causing damage. Sterilise the affected area with a suitable fungicidal wash (available from most DIY stores), following the manufacturer's instructions. Keep checking the affected area for at least a week. If the mould returns, apply the fungicidal wash again. When you have successfully treated the mould, you can redecorate. If you are wallpapering, choose a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth. A good quality fungicidal paint will also help to prevent mould. If mould or mildew is growing on clothing or carpets, you should dry clean them. To prevent mould returning, make sure you control condensation in your home.

Condensation

How much do YOU produce?

We all generate extra moisture to the air inside our homes, simply through everyday activities. Even our BREATHING adds some moisture – think how you can fog-up a cold window or mirror by breathing on them.

One person asleep adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and twice as much when they are active during the day.

Here is an idea of how much air moisture a household of **TWO** people can produce in a single day:

Normal moisture produced by breathing etc.	3 pints
Washing dishes	2 pints
A bath or shower	3 pints
Drying clothes indoors	9 pints
Cooking and use of a kettle	6 pints
Total moisture added in one day	23 pints

Have I got damp or is it condensation?

Is the problem on north-facing walls, in the corner of a room, in cupboards, behind furniture or under work surfaces?

This is usually the result of condensation, where there is little air movement

Can you see water droplets on windows or water pooling on window sills?

This is condensation

Can you see mould looking like black spots along the edges of your skirting or ceilings?

This is condensation

Is there a clearly defined damp stain?

This might be penetrating damp or a water leak – you need to report this to us

Can you see a 'tidemark' on ground floor room walls, extending to around 900-1000mm above the floor surface?

This is uncommon. You need to report this to us