

Your guide to controlling condensation and damp mould in your home



NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council


Homes
FOR NORTHUMBERLAND



Controlling condensation and damp mould in your home

If you notice streaming windows, damp surfaces and musty smells in your home, it might be because there is too much condensation inside.

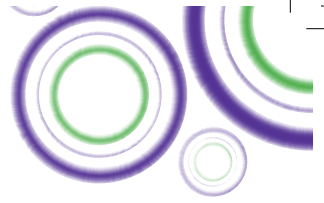
There are three main causes of condensation

- » Moisture produced by everyday activities such as bathing and cooking.
- » Not enough ventilation.
- » Cool temperatures.

Cooking, drying clothes, showering, even breathing add to the moisture in the air. If this moisture is allowed to build up it can cause damp. This can cause black mould growth on walls, ceilings, furniture and clothing. Some people do not realise that this mould growth is often caused by condensation from normal activities, mistakenly thinking these are signs of damp caused by problems with the property itself.

This leaflet gives helpful advice on how to treat condensation in the home.





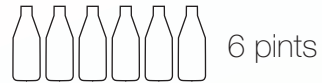
How much moisture can be produced in your home in a day?

You can produce around 22 pints of water in your home each day through everyday activities.

2 people active for 1 day



Cooking and boiling a kettle



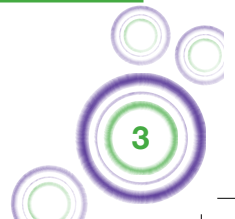
Having a bath or shower



Washing dishes



Drying clothes



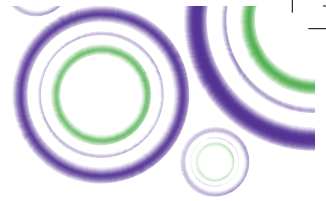


There are three main ways to tackle the problem

1. Stop moisture building up.
2. Ventilate, or air, the home.
3. Keep your home warm.

Stop moisture building up

- » Dry clothes outside where possible.
- » Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles.
- » Cover boiling pans when cooking.
- » When cooking, bathing or washing and drying clothes, close kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into colder rooms, even after you have finished.
- » Make sure tumble dryers are vented to the outside. If your tumble dryer is un-vented, fit an external ventilation kit (permission will be required from Northumberland County Council prior to carrying out this work).
- » Avoid using bottled gas or paraffin heaters as these produce a lot of moisture and can also be a health and safety risk if not used and stored appropriately.
- » Avoid placing damp clothing in wardrobes.



Ventilate, or air the home

- » Where drying clothes inside is necessary, do so in a small room with windows open
- » Open windows or trickle vents each day to ventilate your home.
- » When cooking or washing, open windows or use extractors.
- » If you have one, use an extractor fan when cooking and bathing.
- » Do not block air vents – this is also important where gas and heating appliances are concerned as they need a supply of oxygen to work effectively and allow gases, such as carbon monoxide, to escape.
- » Allow air to circulate around furniture and in cupboards by making sure they are not overfilled and there is space between the furniture and the wall.

Keep your home warm

- » Keep your heating on a low setting for longer periods when the weather is cold or wet. This is more effective than short bursts of high heat.
- » Draught proofing will keep your home warmer – and help reduce fuel bills. When the whole house is warmer, condensation is less likely to form.
- » Insulating your loft and walls will help.





Important things to remember

- » Do not block permanent ventilators.
- » Never block a chimney opening.
- » Do not draught proof:
 - » - rooms where there is condensation or mould growth
 - » - rooms where there is a gas cooker or a fuel-burning heater
- » Do not put furniture directly against cold external walls.

What to do if your home already has mould

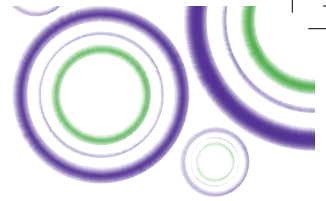
How do you get rid of it?

Do not disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning. Mould is a living organism and needs killing to get rid of it. To do this, wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash – available from DIY stores – making sure you follow the Manufacturer's instructions. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.

Do not use bleach or washing up liquid.

After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring.

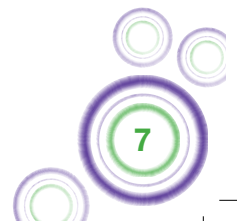
This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.



I have followed the advice in this leaflet, what do I do next?

If you have followed the advice given in this leaflet, then you should begin to notice a considerable improvement in four to six weeks. If the problem persists, it may be due to another cause of damp such as penetrating damp. This is caused by a problem with the fabric of the building which means rainwater is able to get through the walls, roof, windows or doors.

If you require further advice please contact customer services on 01670 542424.





Please contact our Customer Services Centre if you would like to receive this information in another language or format, for example Braille or audio.

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