

Liverpool
**Healthy
Homes**

Healthier homes,
Healthier lives



Controlling Condensation and Mould

Liverpool 
Primary Care Trust



Liverpool
City Council

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Se deseja obter informação noutra idioma ou formato, diga-nos.

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Póngase en contacto con nosotros si desea recibir información en otro idioma o formato.

Türkçe bilgi almak istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

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1 – What Is Condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If air gets cold, it cannot hold all 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. This is condensation. 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 when the weather is dry. It doesn't always leave a 'tidemark' round its edges on walls. If there is a 'tidemark', this dampness might have another cause, such as water leaking into your home from a plumbing fault, loose roof tiles or rising damp.

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.

First steps against condensation

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

- Dry your windows and windowsills every morning, as well as 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.

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', and ensure that you follow the instructions for its safe use. These fungicidal washes are often available at local supermarkets. Dry-clean mildewed clothes, and shampoo carpets. Do not try to remove mould by using a brush or vacuum cleaner.

After treatment, redecorate using good-quality fungicidal paint and a fungicidal resistant wall paper paste to help prevent mould recurring. 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 dampness.

2a – 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.

2b – Too Much Moisture Being Produced In Your Home

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even our breathing adds some moisture (remember breathing on cold windows and mirrors to fog them up?). One person asleep adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and at twice that rate when active during the day.

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

2 people at home can produce	=	3 pints
A bath or shower	=	2 pints
Drying clothes indoors	=	9 pints
Cooking and use of a kettle	=	6 pints
Washing dishes	=	2 pints
Bottled gas heater (8 hours use)	=	4 pints
Total moisture added in one day	=	26 pints or 14.8 litres

Reduce the potential for condensation by producing less moisture

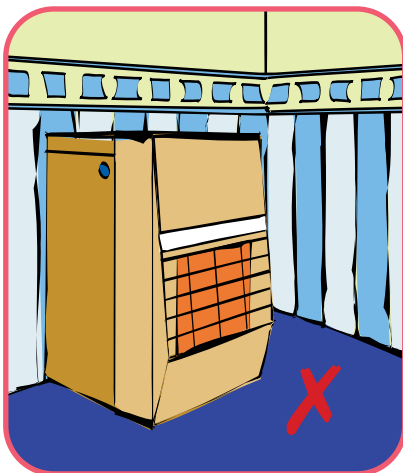
- Hang your washing outside to dry if at all possible, or hang it in the bathroom with the door closed and a window slightly open or extractor fan on. Don't be tempted to put it on radiators or in front of a radiant heater.





- Always cook with pan lids on, and turn the heat down once the water has boiled. Only use the minimum amount of water for cooking vegetables.
- When filling your bath, run the cold water first then add the hot - it will reduce the steam by 90% which leads to condensation.

- If you use a tumble drier, make sure it is vented to the outside or that it is of the new condensing type.
- Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen as it produces moisture when burning gas. (You might notice your windows misting over).



- Try to avoid use of bottled gas heaters; they produce about 8 pints of moisture from an average-sized gas cylinder. (Tenancy Agreements may not allow the use of this type of heater).

3 – Ventilation Of The Home

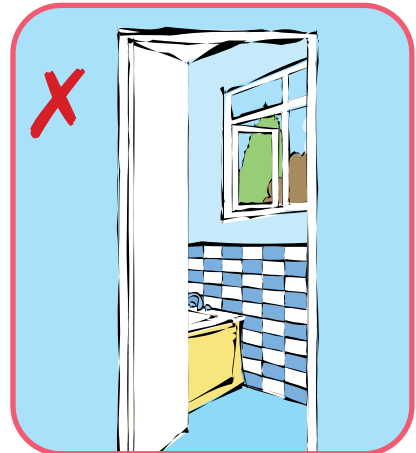
Ventilation can help to reduce condensation by removing moist air from your home and replacing it with drier air from outside.

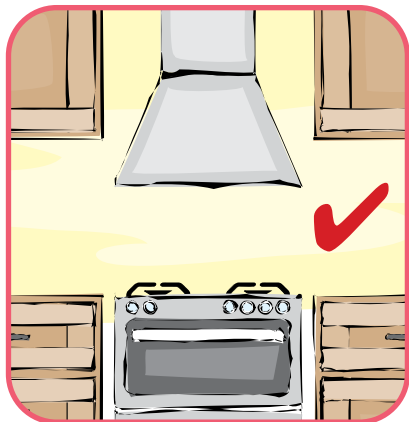


- Help to reduce condensation that has built up overnight by 'crossventilating' your home - opening to the first notch a small window downstairs and a small one upstairs. (They should be on opposite sides of the house, or diagonally opposite if you live in a flat). At the same time, open the interior room doors, this will allow drier air to circulate throughout your home. Cross-ventilation should be carried out for about 30 minutes each day.



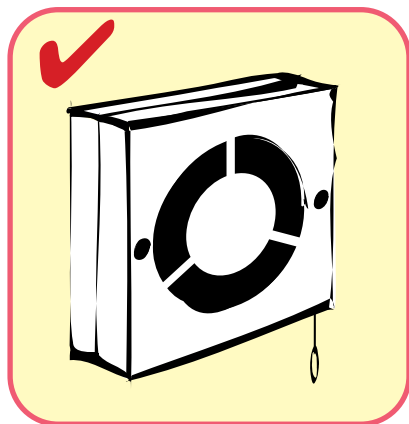
Note: Make sure that accessible windows will not cause a security problem - remember to close them when you go out.





- Ventilate your kitchen when cooking, washing up or washing by hand. A window slightly open is as good as one open. If you have one, use your cooker extractor hood or extractor fan.
- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom for about 20 minutes after use by opening a small top window. Use an extractor fan if possible - they are cheap to run and very effective.

- Ventilate your bedroom by leaving a window slightly open at night, or use trickle ventilators if fitted. (But again, remember your security).
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent moisture escaping into the rest of the house.



- To reduce the risk of mildew on clothes and other stored items, allow air to circulate round them by removing 'false' wardrobe backs or drilling breather holes in them. You can place furniture on blocks to allow air to circulate underneath. Keep a small gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls, and where possible place wardrobes and furniture against internal walls. Pull shelves away from the backs of wardrobes and cupboards. Never overfill wardrobes and cupboards, as it restricts air circulation.

4 – 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 draughtproofing.

Insulation and draughtproofing will also help keep the whole house warmer and will cut your fuel bills. When the whole house is warmer, condensation becomes less likely.

Loft and wall insulation are the most effective forms of insulation.

If you install any draughtproofing, observe the following guidance:



- Do not draughtproof rooms with a condensation problem, or where there is a heater or cooker that burns gas or solid fuel.
- Do not block permanent ventilators or airbricks installed for heating or heating appliances.
- Do not draughtproof bathroom or kitchen windows.

If you have reason to believe that your home could benefit from an improvement to its loft or wall insulation, please contact your landlord to enquire about the possibility of such an improvement.

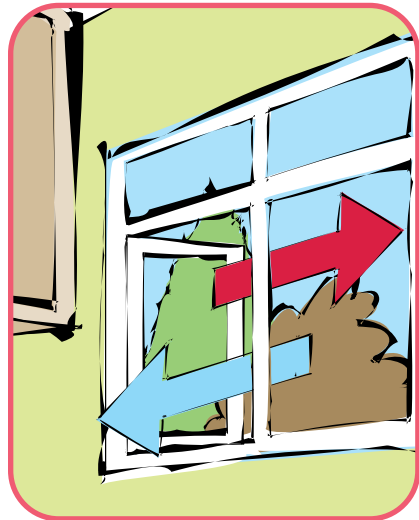
5 – The Temperature Of Your Home

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 other rooms 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.

Keeping the heating on at 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.

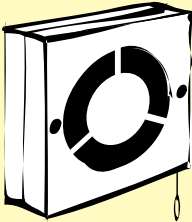
- If you have a heating system such as underfloor electric but are afraid to use it because you've been told it is expensive to run, please contact the Energy Savings Trust for an advice guide on how to control your system on FREEPHONE 0800 512 012. You might find that it costs less to run than you expect or have experienced in the past.
- If you don't have heating in every room, you could keep the doors of unheated rooms open to allow some heat into them.
- 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 a low setting. Remember, you should not use portable bottled gas heaters in homes suffering with condensation as they give out a lot of moisture whilst in use. Contrary to popular belief, 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 the 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.



6 – To Control Condensation Remember The Key Points

**Reduce The Amount Of
Moisture You Produce
See Actions In Section 3**



**Improve The Ventilation
SEE ACTIONS IN SECTION 4**

**Reduce The Number Of Cold
Surfaces In Your Home
SEE ACTIONS IN SECTION 5**



**Maintain An Adequate
Temperature
SEE ACTIONS IN SECTION 6**

Further Information

To receive a Liverpool City Council Energy Advice Pack regarding –

- Energy Saving Tips
- Information on Energy Efficiency Grants

Useful Contact Telephone Numbers

Gas Leaks: National Grid	0800 111 999
Power Cuts	0845 272 7999
Energy Gas and Electricity. Consumer Complaints	0845 906 0708
Winter Fuel Payments	0845 915 1515
Age UK	0800 009 966
Additional Pension Benefit Enquiries	0800 99 1234
Disabled Living Foundation	0845 130 9177
Benefit Enquiry Line for People with Disabilities, and their Carers	0800 882 200
For Tenants with existing E.A.G.A. Heating Systems problems	0800 316 6011

Energy Efficiency

To see what you can do relatively cheaply on a D-I-Y basis, ring the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512 012 for a copy of the:

- **'D-I-Y Guide to Lower Fuel Bills'**.

Heating Systems

For information on how to run heating systems economically, the following guides are also available from the Energy Saving Trust on: 0800 512 012:

- **'Essential Guide to Central Heating Systems'**
- **'Central Heating Combination Boiler Systems'**
- **'Underfloor Heating'**
- **'Storage Heaters'**

Monitoring Costs

Advice on how to monitor the cost of the gas and electricity you are using, and methods of spreading your winter heating bills, are given in the guides:

- **'Controlling your Gas and Electricity Bills'**
- **'Fuel Payment Method Guide'**

Gas Electricity Consumer Council 0845 906 0708

How to contact us

If you have any concerns about mould in your home contact us on: 0800 0121754.

Alternatively, e-mail your enquiries to:
healthyhomesprogramme@liverpool.gov.uk

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