

# A guide to managing moisture in your home

greatplaces  
HOUSING GROUP



*Guidance and top tips to help you manage moisture and condensation to prevent damp and mould in your home. If you are struggling with condensation, damp or mould in your home, please contact us as soon as possible – we are here to help.*



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## Why is too much moisture a problem?

Too much moisture in your home can lead to condensation, and eventually damp and mould.

Moisture is created in our homes every day, by activities such as drying clothes, cooking, washing the dishes and even just by breathing!

Managing moisture in your home can reduce the risk of damp and mould appearing in your property.

### Did you know?

- One person asleep adds half a pint of water to the air overnight.
- Moisture is also created by our pets.

*The illustration to the right shows how much extra water you could be adding to the air in your home in a day.*



# Top tips to help you manage and prevent moisture in your home

## 1. Produce less moisture

- Dry clothes outdoors where possible. If you need to dry your clothes indoors, use a clothes airer in the bathroom with the door closed and either a window open or extractor fan on to allow ventilation.

**Tip:** an airer rack that fits over the bath is a good idea if you live in a small flat.

- If your bathroom doesn't have a window, the kitchen is another option for drying clothes as long as it's warm, has some trickle ventilation (slotted vents in the window frame) and you keep the door closed. It is not advised to dry clothes in a bedroom.
- Check if you need to leave the light on to keep any bathroom or kitchen fan running if it's not activated by a humidity control.



- Avoid drying your washing on a radiator as this creates a lot of moist air, very quickly!
- If you have a tumble drier, ensure it is vented to the outside (never into the home). This can be done through an outside wall or to an open window/door. If it is a self-condensing dryer, make sure this is in a well-ventilated room.
- Always cover pans when cooking and do not leave the kettle boiling, to reduce steam.
- When you're running a bath, put cold water in first then add hot – it reduces steam by 90%.



## 2.

## Ventilate your home and remove moisture

Ventilation is key to making sure that condensation doesn't form on surfaces. To ventilate your home, you may only need to open the window slightly or use the trickle vent if you have UPVC windows. This allows warm, moist air to escape to the outside.

- Wipe down windows, windowsills, walls and shower walls every morning to remove condensation and open the window or use an extractor fan to help let the moisture out.
- Open windows briefly when you get up in the morning, to bring in some drier air from outside and let moisture escape after it's built up from your breathing overnight.
- Throw back bedsheets or duvets to air the bed and bedding.
- Try not to leave clothing or bedding in the corners of rooms.
- If you can, put free-standing wardrobes and other furniture against internal walls and leave a gap of about two inches between the furniture and wall, so air can circulate around the room.



- Leave your extractor fan on as long as possible as the moisture from showers, baths and cooking will stay trapped in your home.

**Did you know:** Over the course of a year, the typical running cost of an extractor fan in a bathroom is only £3.68.\*

*\*(National Residential Landlords Association)*

- Open the window or turn on your extractor fan before you start cooking or have a bath or shower. Keep the door closed to stop moisture spreading around your home. In colder weather, you don't need to air your home for hours, around 20 minutes should do it, before you start to feel cold.
- Keep window trickle vents open when you're in the room, even in the winter when your heating is on, to allow ventilation.
- Make sure other vents are open and not blocked.
- If you have a dehumidifier, these are a good way to reduce moisture. (A dehumidifier which extracts up to 20 litres a day, with a wattage of 480w costs just 16p to run for one hour.)\*

*\*Based on Energy Saving Trust data from October 2022*



**Did you know:** Certain house plants can help remove moisture from the air, including English Ivy, Peacy Lily, Snake Plants and Palms.

**Did you know:** Salt is a cheap and effective way to reduce moisture caused by condensation. Fill small pots with rock salt and leave them on your windowsill to draw out moisture.

### 3. Heat your home evenly

- In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm and avoid condensation is to keep low background heat on for the majority of the day, rather than short bursts of high heat. This avoids surfaces becoming cold which creates moisture.
- If you don't have heating in every room, open doors in these rooms to allow air circulation.
- Depending on your household heating system, consider setting your heating to come on about an hour before everyone gets out of bed and go off as they get up – waiting until you get up and then switching it on manually is too late as condensation may have already formed.



- If you're not in during the day, set the timer so that your home is warm by the time you return to avoid condensation forming.
- If you are unable to heat your home for long periods of time, it is important that you manage moisture by increasing the ventilation of air within your home through extractor fans and opening windows.
- Avoid using portable gas heaters, as they generate large amounts of water vapour that can cause dampness without the sufficient ventilation. They can also create high levels of carbon monoxide which can be incredibly dangerous and present a risk of explosion.

**The government suggests keeping your living areas at 18-20 degrees celsius when you're at home (bedrooms can be a bit cooler at night) but to avoid major condensation problems, the temperature shouldn't drop below 14 degrees celsius.**

Keeping your home warm will help to reduce condensation but, we know that times continue to be hard and appreciate that this is not always possible. If you're struggling with the cost of your heating bills, please visit our cost of living web page for advice and support, including discounts you may be eligible for. **Visit: [www.greatplaces.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk/costofliving)**

## What happens if moisture in a home isn't managed?

If moisture in a home isn't managed, or there are structural issues with the property, this can lead to more serious issues such as damp and mould.

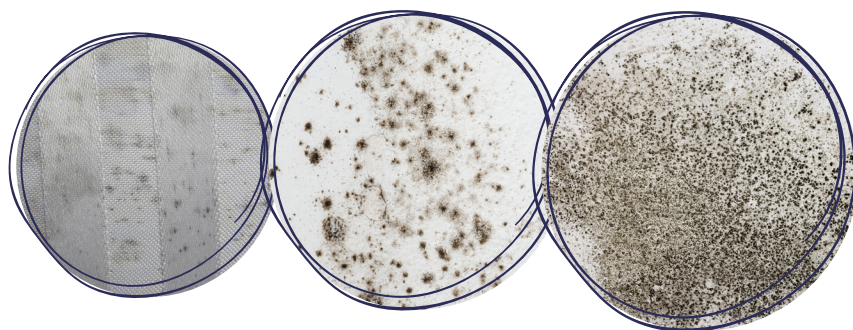
Damp and mould can be a serious problem for your home and health. It affects almost one in five homes in the UK, no matter the age of the property. Damp and mould should be treated as quickly as possible, as it can make asthma and other health conditions worse.

## What can cause mould and what are the signs to look out for?

Damp and mould can be caused by a variety of reasons and the main ones are structural problems with your home and condensation.

Condensation is the most common cause of dampness experienced in all homes, especially during colder months. Condensation is caused by moisture in the air settling on a colder surface, such as a window or wall, or in areas of the home with little air circulation, such as behind furniture.

If your home has condensation, it is possible that mould can grow, often as black spots on your walls, ceilings, furnishings and even on clothes and toys.



## Treating mould - what can be done to keep mould under control

If you spot a small amount of mould in your home, you can try to treat this yourself. To kill and remove the mould, regularly follow these steps:

1. Carefully remove excess mould with a damp cloth and throw away after. Do not brush mould as this releases spores into the air.
2. Use rubber gloves to wipe down affected areas using a fungicidal wash or mould and mildew products in preference to bleach, for health and safety reasons. Wearing safety glasses and a mask is recommended.
3. Once the mould has been removed, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal/anti-mould paint.
4. Dry clean or dispose of mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.

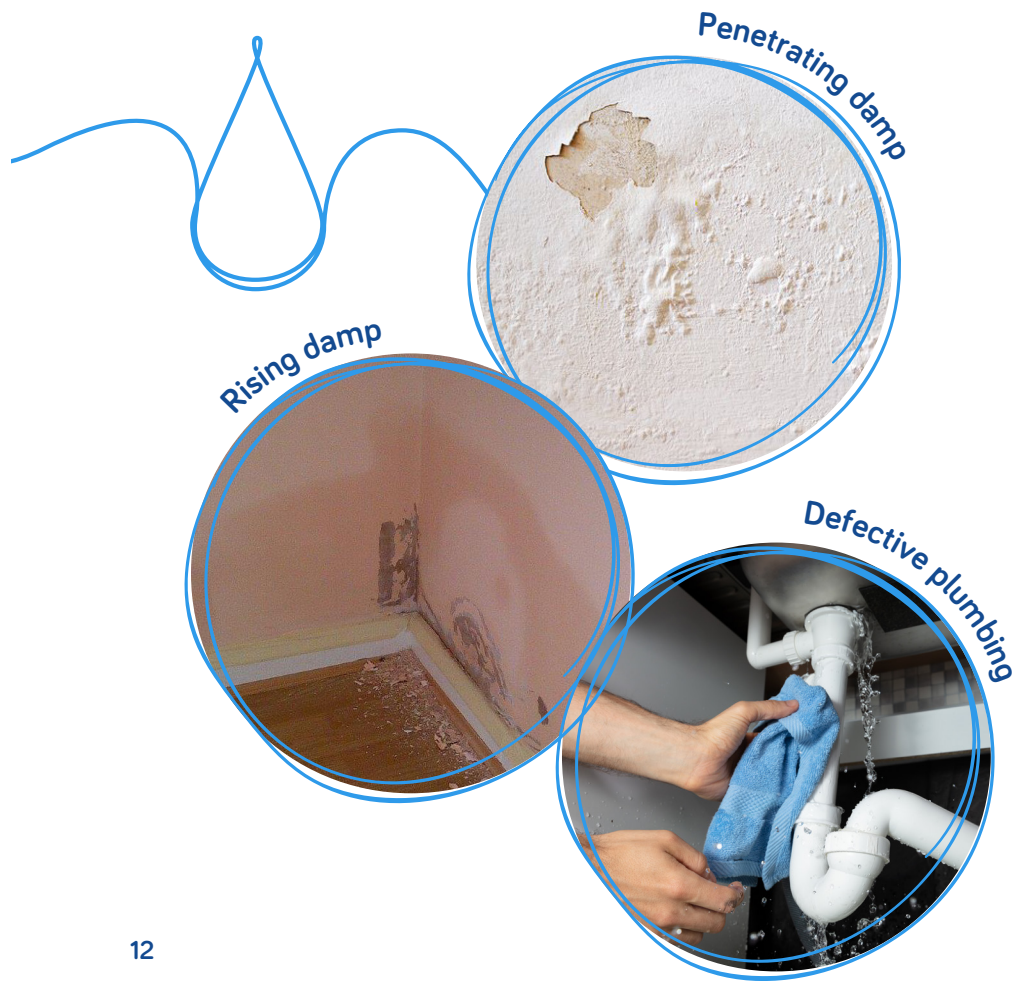


## What can cause damp?

Moisture can also get into your home in a number of other ways, including rain getting through leaking roofs, blocked or damaged guttering, leaky walls and poorly fitted windows and doors.

Leaks from plumbing faults can also cause moisture to get into your property. This could include failed appliances and poorly sealed baths and showers.

Ground water can rise up through the walls and floor if the damp proof course isn't working properly.



## Types of damp to look for

### Rising damp

This is a type of damp caused by water rising from the ground into your home. It only affects basements and ground floor rooms and rises 30-60cm above ground level. It usually leaves a 'tide mark' low down on your wall and you may also notice white salts on the affected areas. Rising damp will be present all year round but is more noticeable in winter. If left untreated, rising damp may cause wall plaster to crumble and paper to lift in the affected area.

### Penetrating damp

This type of dampness is primarily found on the external walls of the property, due to defects such as missing pointing (mortar) to the brickwork, cracked rendering or missing roof tiles. These defects allow water to pass from the outside to the inner surfaces. Penetrating dampness is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined 'damp patch' which looks and feels damp to the touch.

### Defective plumbing

Leaks from water and waste pipes, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, are relatively common. They can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and remains damp whatever the weather conditions outside. A quick examination of the water and waste pipes serving the kitchen and bathroom, the seals around the bath, shower and sinks, and the external pipework (e.g. guttering) will usually find the source of the problem.

## Our commitment to you

If you notice any of the defects listed in this booklet, or are worried that there may be a problem, please let us know straight away to avoid it becoming more serious. We'll then arrange a visit to your home.

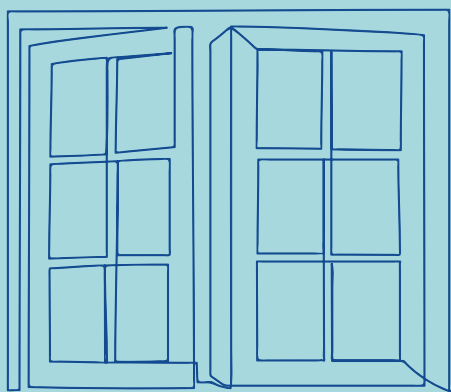
*We aim to carry out the initial investigation of these reports within 10 working days.*

We will treat all of our customers as individuals, with different support needs, and we will tailor our approach to make sure that it works for you, so please let us know if there is any additional information we need to consider. We will work with you in a flexible way to address issues and concerns around condensation, damp and mould.

The quickest and easiest way for you to contact us is to use the Live Chat facility on our website. It is four times quicker than phone and available **8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.**

You can report issues through our online form on our website, visit: [www.greatplaces.org.uk/reportdampandmould](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk/reportdampandmould)

Or by telephone: **0300 123 1966**



## Useful information

You can find additional information on managing moisture in your home, as well as information on damp and mould on our website.

*Visit: [www.greatplaces.org.uk/managingmoisture](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk/managingmoisture)*

or scan the QR code here



## Cost of living support

Visit our cost of living webpage for advice and support, including discounts you may be eligible for.

*Visit: [www.greatplaces.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk/costofliving)*

or scan the QR code here



## Energy Saving Trust

A non-profit organisation that provides free impartial advice, helping you save money and reduce carbon dioxide emissions from your home.

*Call the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on **0300 123 1234** or visit: [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)*

If you require this information in another language you can request this by emailing [translationsandinterpretations@greatplaces.org.uk](mailto:translationsandinterpretations@greatplaces.org.uk).

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