

Condensation

controlling condensation in your home



What is condensation?

Condensation in your home is caused by warm, vapour-laden air meeting a cold surface such as windows, mirrors, walls and tiling etc. When the air cools, it can't retain the moisture, and some of it condenses into small droplets of water on these cold surfaces. You can see this happening on the bathroom mirror when the room is steamed up with hot water from a running bath or shower.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. 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.

Modern features such as double glazing and loft insulation are important to keep our homes warm, but they can also cause problems associated with poor air circulation.

Where there is inadequate ventilation, condensation and stale air can result. With the relatively high cost of heating, we don't want to keep our windows open particularly when it's cold outside.

What can we do?

Steps to minimising condensation

When cooking, cover pans and avoid leaving kettles on the boil.

When washing clothes, wherever possible, it is better to dry your clothes outside. If this is not possible, put them in the bathroom with the door closed and the bathroom fan on (if fitted), and leave the window open. If you have a tumble dryer, run the vent pipe outside (unless it is a self-condensing). You can adjust the vent pipe to run outside, with a simple DIY kit.

It is important to make sure your home is properly ventilated. There will always be some moisture present in the home and you should have some form of ventilation available — often by air bricks (which must never be covered over) or keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open all the time if possible and especially when someone is in the room.

When using the bathroom or kitchen, keep the door closed whenever possible. This will help to contain the moist or stale air in that room.

Where furniture such as cupboards are against the wall, try to keep a small distance between the back of the cupboard and the wall, particularly if the wall is generally cold, and some form of ventilation in any cupboards is a good idea, to keep the air circulating.

Whilst it is a good idea to draught proof your home, it is important to remember not to block airways that will prevent air circulating.

Don't block fixed ventilators such as air bricks or chimneys completely.

Don't draught proof rooms where there is a problem with condensation or mould.

Don't draught proof the kitchen or bathroom.

Wherever possible, particularly in cold weather, you should try to keep your home warm with some form of background heating, even if you are not in the home. This applies in particular to bedrooms and especially in flats.

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