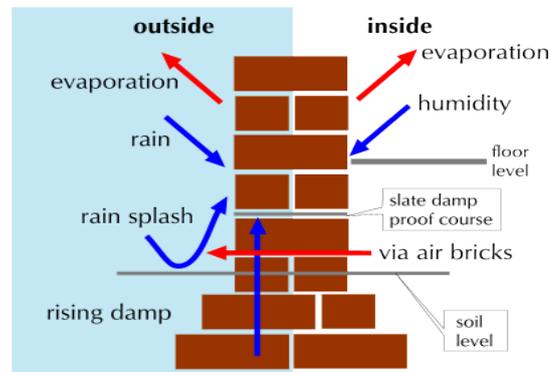


How to prevent damp, mould and condensation in your home

Too much moisture and condensation in your home can lead to damp and mouldy conditions. Damp and mould could occur on walls, ceilings and behind furniture.

Rising damp from the ground can also be a problem and is usually where a damp course is defective. This can be identified by a white tidemark on the walls. If you have rising damp in the property, you will need to contact a professional or your landlord to rectify the issue. Otherwise there are things you can do to prevent other types of damp and mould.



How to avoid condensation and damp in your property:

Although it is difficult to completely stop condensation, you can do things in your home that can help reduce it.

Heating and insulation:

- Make sure you have adequate heating and insulation in your home.
- Keep temperatures between 19-22°C in living rooms, kitchen and bathrooms, and 16-20°C in bedrooms. When away from home, avoid temperatures under 15°C.
- Do not heat up cold bedrooms in the evening by opening the door to heated rooms. The warm air will condense onto the cold walls of the bedroom.
- Good insulation of a building creates warmer walls and ceilings, which prevents condensation and inhibits mould.
- Airtight windows and buildings require more active ventilation.

Ventilation:

- Keep a small window open when someone is in the room and open the trickle ventilators if you have them.
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider, or better still, use an extractor fan if one is fitted.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen and bathroom has an extractor fan. This will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.
- Do not block air-brick vents or ventilators.



- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes and avoid putting too many things in them as this stops the air circulating.
- Cut a ventilation slot in the back of each shelf or use slatted shelves.
- Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- Be wary of draughtproofing rooms with mould problems, or windows in rooms prone to mould like kitchens and bathrooms

Moisture:

You can reduce the condensation in your home by producing less moisture:

- Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- Avoid using paraffin and portable bottled gas heaters as these heaters produce a lot of moisture in the air.
- Do not dry washing on radiators. Instead dry washing outdoors on a line, or put in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or a fan on.
- Make sure tumble dryers are vented to the outside.

How to prevent mould:

Treat any mould you may already have in your home. You can buy household fungicidal wash products from most homeware stores. If you then deal with condensation as listed above, mould should not reappear.

- Wipe down any condensation forming on windows and sills every morning.
- Kill and remove mould with a fungicidal wash, which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely.
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to prevent mould recurring. **Please note:** this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

The long-term solution to avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness. You can carry out some of these measures at very little cost however, if you are a tenant you may need permission from your landlord. Remember that a balance is needed between insulation, moisture and ventilation and so you may need to experiment and persevere until the problem is resolved.

There are various grants, loans and discount schemes which may apply to you. You may even be able to get free insulation and a new heating system if you are on certain government benefits or have long term health conditions. If you are a tenant, your landlord may be entitled to heating and insulation grants.

To find out more and see if you are eligible contact the Warm Homes team on 0800 170 1174 or apply online at kent.gov.uk/warmhomes

