

# Damp and condensation

## Fixing the problem

No one wants to live in a damp home. Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and cause wooden window frames to rot.

Some damp is caused by **condensation**. This can lead to a growth in mould that appears as a cloud of little black dots. For other kinds of damp, see box below.

Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a colder surface like a wall, window, mirror etc. The air can't hold the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. It also occurs in places the air is still, like the corners of rooms or behind wardrobes and other furniture.

### How to reduce condensation at home

#### 1] Produce less moisture

Simple things make a huge difference, like covering pans when cooking, drying clothes outdoors, venting your tumble dryer to the outside and not using paraffin heaters or flue-less bottled gas heaters.

#### 2] Let the damp air out and the fresh air in

Consider installing extractor fans in your kitchen and bathroom if they don't have one already, and shut the



### Condensation is not the only cause of damp

'Penetrating damp' is caused by moisture coming into the house through leaking or cracked pipework, a damaged roof, blocked guttering, gaps around window frames and cracked or defective rendering and brickwork. All these problems can be remedied.

'Rising damp' is due to a defective (or non-existent) damp course. This will leave a 'tide mark' about a meter above the floor. Fixing rising damp is a job for a qualified builder.

Newly built homes can sometimes feel damp because the water used during its construction is still drying out.



Condensation mould is unsightly and can cause health problems

doors between these rooms and the rest of the house when they get steamy. Open your windows when you can, and allow the air to circulate behind furniture and through cupboards and wardrobes.

#### 3] Insulate and draught-proof your home

Warm homes suffer less from condensation, so you should make sure your house is well insulated. This means insulating your loft to the recommended depth of 270mm (about 11 inches), and your cavity walls (if your house has them). Your windows and external doors should be draught-proofed, and you should consider secondary glazing if your windows are draughty.

#### 4] Heat your home a little more

Keep a low background heat in unused rooms. Use a thermostat on the heater or radiator, and remember to air the rooms from time to time.

Other actions you can take include fitting condensation channels and sponge strips (available from DIY shops) to windows. These catch dripping condensation and prevent the build-up of water. If you wipe down windows and sills every morning, this will help, but be sure to wring out the cloth rather than dry it on a radiator.

### Find out more ...

We offer free advice on domestic energy use, including details of any grants and offers available for loft and cavity wall insulation

Call free on **0800 512 012\*** or go to **cse.org.uk/grants**



# Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your gas and electricity supplier more money than you need to?

Thought not. Here are 15 ways to cut your bills ...

1) **Keep the oven door shut as much as possible;** every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



2) **Give your clothes a day in the sun;** and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

3) **Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely,** so avoid putting foil on the racks.

4) **Don't leave your phone on charge all night.** It only needs a couple of hours – and don't leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.

5) **Be a friend to your freezer.** Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

6) **Catch 'em young.** Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.



7) **Dodge the draught!**

Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

8) **When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much as you'll actually use** (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

9) **Buying a new TV, washing machine or dishwasher?** Look out for the Energy Saving Trust 'recommended' logo, and remember: the bigger the TV, the more energy it'll use.



10) **Dimmer is smarter.** Use your dimmer switches to reduce the amount of energy used to light your room.

11) **Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash.** Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.



12) **Sleep tight.** Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.

13) **Turn your heating down by 1 degree.** You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.

14) **Put your fridge in a good spot.** Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

15) **New computer?** Remember a laptop typically uses around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.

For free domestic energy advice, call **0800 512 012**  
or go to **[www.cse.org.uk/advice](http://www.cse.org.uk/advice)**



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We are a national charity that shares our knowledge and experience to help people change the way they think and act on energy.



More energy advice at  
[cse.org.uk/advice](http://cse.org.uk/advice)