

## Condensation Tips

### Condensation explained

The air around us contains moisture. Normal life in the home creates moisture. In fact, four people living in a 3 bedroom property can create **112 pints of moisture a week** from just breathing, cooking, showering or bathing, and boiling the kettle.

Warmer air can hold more moisture than cooler air. So when air is cooled rapidly the moisture it contains can turn into water droplets known as **condensation**, for example:

- When you can see your breath on a cold day, what you see is a cloud of tiny droplets as the warm air of your breath is cooled by the air around you
- When you breathe onto a mirror, what you see is tiny droplets forming on the surface as the warm air of your breath is cooled by the mirror

In these examples condensation is easy to see, but you may not notice condensation on your walls, ceilings or window frames. If condensation is left on a surface for long enough **black mould** will begin to grow. This is one reason why it's important to reduce and manage condensation properly.

Ways to reduce condensation are:

- Reducing the amount of moisture in the air
- Keeping the air moving by using ventilation: this helps to keep surfaces dry (think about how washing on the line dries quicker on a breezy day!)
- Reducing the number of cooler surfaces (by smart use of heating for example)
- Not letting steamy air from one room into the rest of your home

Because your daily life creates moisture in the air you can't always prevent condensation, so you may need to manage it by wiping down.

## **So how can you reduce the condensation in your home?**

### **Tip 1: Vent washers and driers**

If you have a washing machine or tumble dryer in your home, ensure that it is vented correctly. From just one load of washing two litres of water is released into the air.

### **Tip 2: Drying clothes**

Where possible, dry your clothes outdoors to prevent moisture from building up in your home. Otherwise dry them in a bathroom or kitchen with the door closed and the fan on (or windows open) until the clothes are fully dry. Drying clothes on radiators releases a lot of moisture into the air quickly, creating a high risk of condensation.

### **Tip 3: Manage those steamy rooms**

When cooking, showering or bathing:

- keep your kitchen or bathroom door shut to prevent the moisture in the air from going into cooler rooms and forming condensation
- keep the extractor fan on **or** the window open (not both – the air will just come in through the window and out through the fan instead of circulating through the room!)
- keep the door shut and fan on for about 20 minutes after you have finished to properly ventilate the room

### **Tip 4: Keep steam under control**

When cooking, cover your pans with a lid to contain the moisture being created from water boiling.

### **Tip 5: Manage your windows carefully**

Your windows are often the coolest part of your room so are prone to condensation. Keep curtains and blinds open during the day and wipe off excess condensation from the windows. Open the windows slightly or use trickle vents if you have them. This will allow air to circulate which will reduce condensation and help moisture to evaporate.

### **Tip 6: Pets and plants**

Many families have house pets and plants. These produce moisture too. Make sure you cover up your aquarium or fish tanks to prevent evaporation. If you start to notice mould or condensation near your house plants, think about moving them to a better ventilated spot or outdoors.

### **Tip 7: Let the air get around your cupboards**

Do not overfill your wardrobes or kitchen cupboards. Air moisture trapped in warm overfilled cupboards can lead to mould growth because the air can't circulate freely inside. If you notice a musty smell, or your clothes have a damp feeling to them, your cupboard or wardrobe may be overfilled.

### **Tip 8: Let the air get to your walls**

Make sure that your furniture is at least 50mm away from walls so that air can circulate behind. Internal walls are a bit warmer than external walls – try placing your furniture against internal walls to reduce the risk of condensation.

### **Tip 9: Manage your heating**

Don't let the walls and surfaces in your house get too cold: setting your heating to maintain a minimum temperature of 15°C will help to prevent condensation.

**Tip 10: People breathe out moisture!**

If you use a room regularly (such as a living room) and it's not cold outside, open a window slightly to improve ventilation in the room. You and your family in a room together create moisture in the air just by breathing, so ventilate to help prevent condensation.

**Tip 11: Use your extractor fans well**

Make full use of your extractor fans and use them properly. Remember:

- Some fans are designed to carry on running for a while after you switch them off - this is normal so you should leave them to run
- Some new fans have a 'humidistat' – this means they come on automatically when there is too much moisture in the air
- Don't turn your fan off at the wall switch