

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even our breathing adds some moisture (remember breathing on cold windows and mirrors to fog them up?). One person asleep adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and at twice that rate when active during the day.

To give you some idea as to how much extra water this could be in a day, here are a few illustrations:-

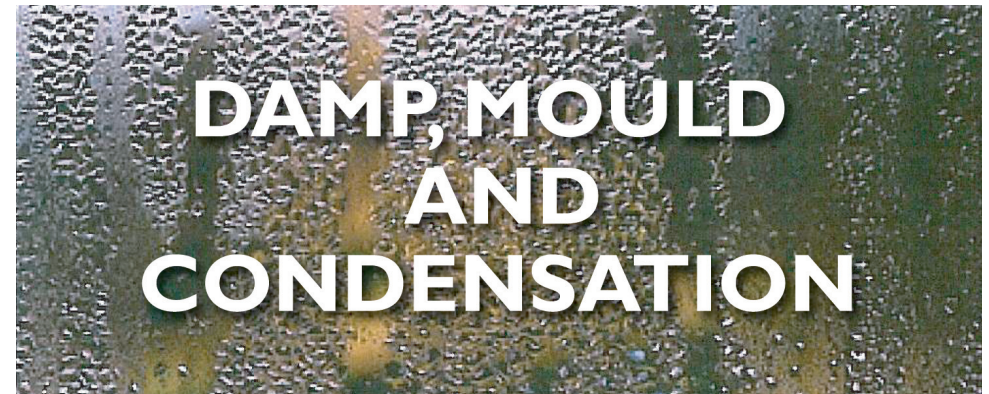
- 2 people at home can produce = 3 pints
- A bath or shower = 2 pints
- Drying clothes indoors = 9 pints
- Cooking and use of a kettle = 6 pints
- Washing dishes = 2 pints
- Bottled gas heater (8 hour use) = 4 pints

Total moisture added in one day - 26 pints or 14.8 litres.

The only way of preventing severe mould growth is to eliminate the cause of the dampness. If you deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not appear.



English Rural, Hall House, Graphite Square,
Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5EE
Tel: 020 7820 7930
info@englishrural.org.uk
www.englishrural.co.uk



What is CONDENSATION?

Moisture is always in the air, even when you cannot see it. If the air gets colder, it cannot hold all of the moisture and tiny drops of water appear on cold surfaces. You will have noticed it when you can see your breath on a cold day or if your mirror mists over in the bathroom. It occurs normally during cold weather and unlike other forms of dampness, it does not leave a tidemark. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It will often form on north facing walls which are particular cold spots.

Is this the only cause of DAMP in my home?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. It can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflow pipes
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing
- Blocked gutters
- Rising damp - due to a defective damp-proof course or because there is none. This only occurs on ground floor walls and can usually be identified by a tidemark up to 1 metre above the ground
- Rain penetrating around window frames or leaking through a cracked pipe.

These causes of damp will often leave a tidemark or have a defined edge.

What is MOULD?

If you do not remove condensation it can turn into mould. Mould can grow wherever there are damp surfaces in your home. Black pinpricks of mould will form on walls, ceilings and even furnishings.

The mould can be treated but first you must remove the main cause - condensation.

How to avoid CONDENSATION

1 Produce less moisture

- Use lids on pans and do not leave the kettle boiling
- Avoid using paraffin and portable flueless bottled-gas heaters. These heaters put a lot of moisture into the air- one gallon of gas or paraffin produces about one gallon of water
- Dry clothes outside but if you have to dry inside, dry them in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or an extractor fan on. Do not dry in front of a fire or over radiators
- Vent tumble dryers to the outside air, unless they are the self condensing type. You can purchase DIY vent kits for this
- If you are running a bath, put the cold water in first. This reduces the amount of steam.

2 Ventilate your home

- Keep your windows slightly open; keep trickle vents and outside vents open and clear
- Open a window and use an extractor fan after you have taken a bath or shower. Keep the door closed so that the moisture does not reach other rooms, especially bedrooms which are often colder
- Open a window and use an extractor fan when you are cooking; keep the door closed to prevent moisture reaching other rooms
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes - avoid putting too many things in cupboards. Leave space between furniture and walls to allow air to circulate.

3 Draught proof and heat your home

Draught proofing will keep your home warm and will also cut fuel bills. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely.

- During cold weather, make sure there is some low level heating on all day, even when there is no-one at home. It is better to provide a low level of heating all day rather than in short bursts. If you have night storage heaters, talk to your energy supplier. They may be able to change your off-peak heating to one that provides a mid-afternoon boost
- Draught proof around external walls and windows.

Be careful

- Do not block permanent ventilators eg. air bricks
- Do not completely block chimneys. Instead, leave a hole about two bricks in size and fit a louvered grill over it
- Do not draught proof rooms where there is condensation or mould
- Do not draught proof a room where there is a cooker or a fuel burning heater - eg a gas fire
- Do not draught proof windows in the kitchen or bathroom.

Dealing with mould

- It is best to wipe up any condensation regularly to avoid mould. If mould has become a problem you will need to remove it after you have taken steps to reduce the source of condensation
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down any affected areas with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number. Follow the manufacturers instructions precisely
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould. This type of paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper
- When wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further growth mould.