

How to see if you have damp

You'll probably be able to see or smell whether you have damp in the winter, but you can look for warning signs at any time of year. Check the following:

» Walls

Hold your hand against the wall, does it feel very cold or damp? Look for signs of mould or fungal growth which will appear as black speckled marks or grey growths on painted walls, woodwork, and wallpaper. Flaking paint or curling wallpaper can also be a sign.

» Ceilings

As well as looking for signs of mould, pay close attention to the colour of the ceiling. Is it discoloured or stained in areas? Brown patches in the external corners and near chimney breasts can be damp.

» Windows

Condensation on windows in the morning, along with small puddles of water along windowsills, can indicate high moisture levels within your house. This can be both a cause, and symptom, of damp. Black mould may also develop on wooden and PVC window frames, and silicone sealant used around the edge of frames.

» Bathrooms and kitchens

Look at the grouting and sealant for signs of black mould. Check around window frames and on ceilings for similar damage. Look inside cabinets and cupboards to see if there are any areas of staining and mould growth and pay attention to musty smells.

» Furniture and soft furnishings

Black mould can grow on the inside of curtains, blinds and on upholstered surfaces such as sofas. Check the back of furniture for specks of mould and also for cloudy condensation on wooden and plastic surfaces.

» Basements and unheated storage spaces

A musty, damp smell is likely to be first indicator of a problem here. Whilst you're down there, check for staining and mould on painted walls and woodwork.



Prevention is better than cure when it comes to damp problems

» Keep on top of outdoor home maintenance

Check your roof regularly for damage, especially after stormy weather. Keep gutters clear and fix or replace as soon as any damage occurs. A specially designed gutter clearing tool will help to make light work of this or install gutter guards to help keep leaves and debris out.

» Keep the home warm

Try to maintain a constant temperature within your home by setting your thermostat to a lower temperature, but over a longer period of time each day.



» Remove excess moisture

Using a dehumidifier will help to remove excess moisture from the air, leaving your home feeling warmer and more comfortable.

» Make sure your home is well-ventilated

Providing a route for moisture to escape from your home will help to minimise condensation. Open windows when possible – newer window frames may allow you to open windows just a chink and then lock in place. This is especially important during the colder months when we spend more time indoors.



» Take care when cooking

Pans on the stove, as well as kettles, can produce considerable amounts of steam and moisture. Covering pans with a lid whilst cooking will help to minimise condensation on your kitchen windows. Switch on your cooker hood when using the hob and leave on for five minutes once you've finished to help clear the air. Don't forget to regularly replace the filter on your cooker hood to make sure it's working as efficiently as possible.