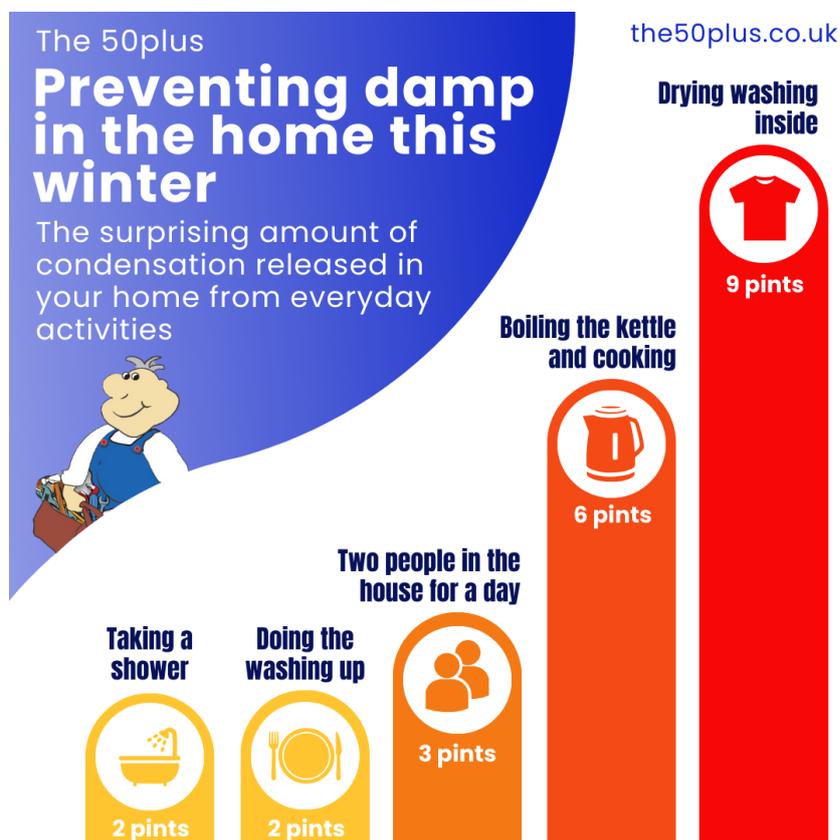


## Condensation and mould in your home

Much of the 'damp' that can be found in homes is really condensation and winter is when it usually occurs. Actual damp it is most likely to be associated with and traceable to a water leak or rising from a ground floor level. If the 'damp' is appearing on walls, near windows, doors and particularly in the corner of a room then it is more likely to be condensation. The 50plus have put together this advice with information Red Kite.



Condensation and mould affects all of us living in our homes, we create moisture from the things we do every day: cooking, cleaning, washing and even just being in our homes. One person sleeping adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and an active person adds twice that rate during the day.

The graphic shows how much extra water you could be adding to the air in your home in just one day.

It is this moisture that creates condensation which can cause serious problems if not managed correctly. While condensation isn't the only cause of mould, it is the one which we can look after ourselves to reduce damage in our homes. It can also be detrimental to health.

The key is to be smart, be sensible, understand possible causes and help yourself. But if in doubt, get advice.

## What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. Water droplets will form on the coolest surface; therefore, it can often be found near windows, doors and particularly in the corner of a room. This is condensation. You may notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath. Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, if it is raining or dry. It does not leave a 'tidemark'. It appears in places where there is little movement of air which is why having too much furniture pushed up against walls allows condensation to form because it stops air circulating.

## Treating the problem

While the damage that condensation and mould can do is serious, there are a few simple tips that you can follow to help you minimise the problem.

### Ventilate

- The easiest and most effective way to reduce condensation is to ventilate your home. Open windows when you can, or at least any vents you have. This allows any excess moisture to be evaporated and stops it from gathering on surfaces
- Ventilate when bathing or showering
- If you live on the ground floor, open the windows when someone is in.

### Remove excess moisture

- Wipe down windows and sills as often as you can. Wring out the cloth you use rather than drying it on a radiator because this will just put moisture back into the air
- In some areas, moisture can collect around window and door frames, so if you see it starting to form, wipe it so it's dry.



### Produce less moisture

- Cover pans when cooking and ensure an extractor is on. Kitchens are one of the most affected areas because of the amount of moisture generated by cooking. If you don't open the windows and allow all the steam from pots and pans to stay in your home, it will settle and cause condensation
- Dry clothes outdoors where you can. If it's warm outside, use an airer to hang your clothes out. If you don't have an outside area, dry your washing inside with the windows open
- Vent your tumble dryer to the outside – this will allow all the moisture to escape and stop it from collecting in your home.



## Heat your home a little more

If possible, keep a low background heat on all day, with background ventilation.

## If you already have mould in your home

If you already have mould in your home, try to treat it as soon as you can. At the first sign of mould, follow these steps:

- Make sure you do not have any water leaks
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames 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. 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 recurring. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wall paper.

If you have any questions about condensation or mould, or want to talk to someone about your home, please call 50plus on your local number or 01494 784 448. If you are a tenant talk to your letting agent or landlord first.