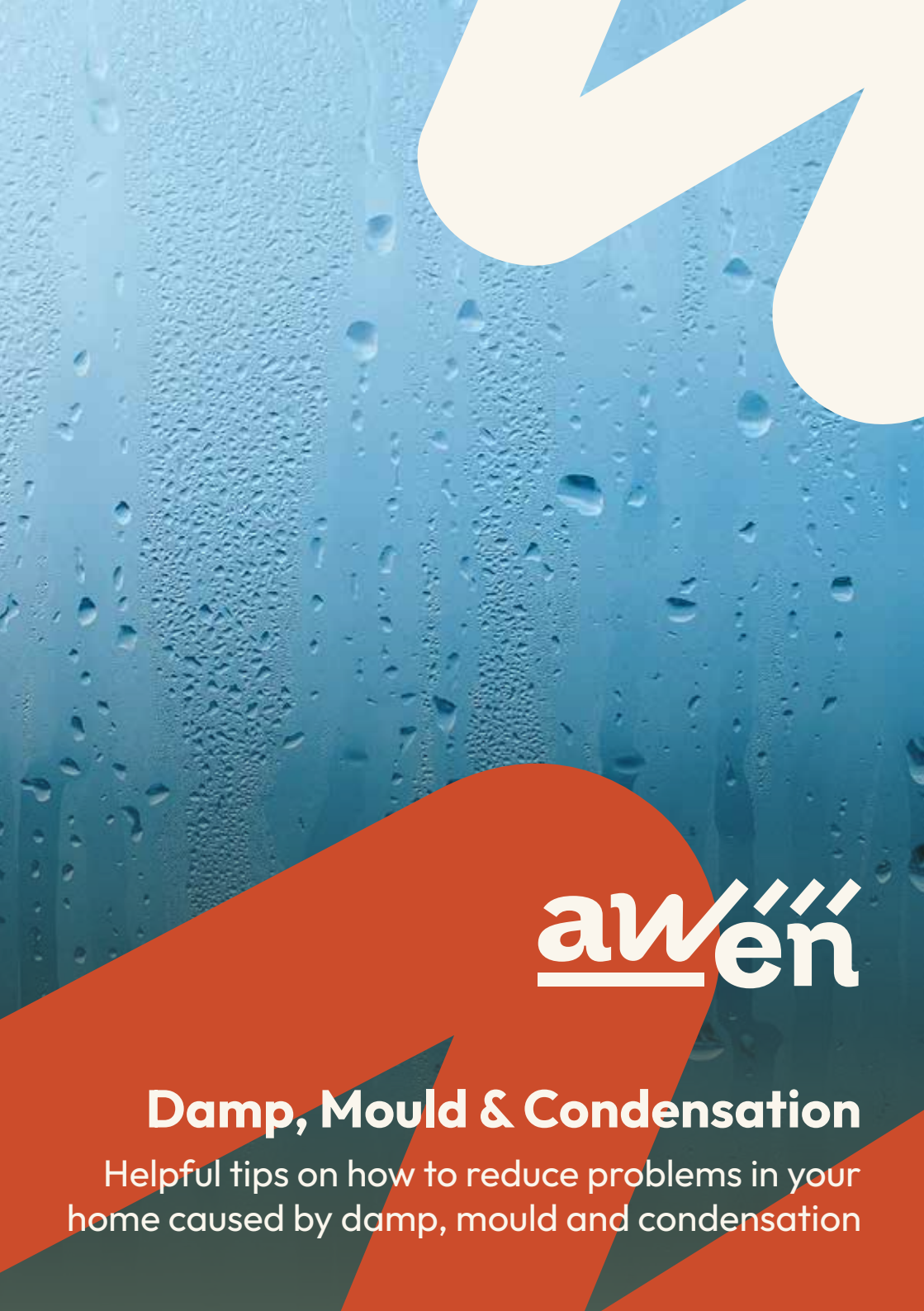


Damp, Mould & Condensation

Helpful tips on how to reduce problems in your home caused by damp, mould and condensation

What is Damp?

No one wants to live in a damp home. Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and cause wooden window frames to rot. As well as being unsightly, it's also unhealthy.

There are three types of 'damp'...

1. Rising damp

Rising damp is caused by ground water moving up through a wall.

Most walls allow some water in, but it is usually stopped by a barrier called a damp proof course.

Rising damp can occur if the damp-proof course is missing or not working properly, or the level of the ground outside your home is higher than your damp-course which could allow water to get above it.

If you have rising damp, you may notice damaged skirting boards and floorboards, crumbling or salt stained plaster and peeling paint and wallpaper. A typical sign of rising damp is the appearance of a tide mark running along the wall.

2. Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp is caused by water leaking through walls horizontally rather than by water travelling up walls. This type of damp is usually caused by structural problems such as faulty guttering or roofing or leaking water and/or heating pipes.

Penetrating damp often shows up as damp patches on walls, ceilings or floors, which may darken when it rains. You are more likely to get penetrating damp if you live in an older building with solid walls, as cavity walls provide some protection.

If you are experiencing something similar in your home, please contact us so we can arrange an inspection.

3. Condensation

Condensation occurs when there is a build up of moisture in the air.

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. Moisture is produced during everyday activities such as cooking, bathing, drying clothes and even breathing!

Condensation is not caused by water penetrating from outside of your home, it is caused by moisture which is produced from inside the home.

Everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside your home. You may notice that there is condensation on your windows first thing in the morning, this is because one person breathing adds half a pint of moisture to the air over night.

The four main factors that cause condensation are:

1. Too much moisture being produced within the home.
2. Not enough ventilation.
3. Cold surfaces.
4. The temperature of your home.

How to Avoid Condensation

Produce less moisture:

- Dry clothes outside whenever possible or in a well-ventilated room.
- Keep saucepan lids on when boiling water or cooking.
- Ensure tumble dryers are vented to the outside.
- DO NOT use bottled gas heaters.
- Wiping down the bath/shower after each use will help prevent mould growth.

Tip

Avoid drying clothes on radiators. Use a clothes horse in your bathroom with the door closed and the window open or extractor fan on.

Do you know the average family produce 20 pints of moisture every day!

Other examples of moisture generating activities are:

- A bath or a shower can produce two pints.
- Drying clothes indoors can produce nine pints.
- Cooking and use of a kettle can produce six pints.
- Washing dishes can produce two pints.

Reduce moisture in the air when using hot water:

- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut to prevent steam getting into the colder rooms.
- Use extractor fans when cooking or washing.
- Open windows and vents so that excess moisture can escape.
- Wipe down condensation from cold surfaces such as windows, window sills and tiled surfaces in all rooms to prevent mould forming.

Increase ventilation to allow moisture to escape

Ventilation is designed to keep your home fresh, healthy and comfortable.

- **Trickle vents:** These are installed to the inside of your window frames and must be left open where necessary.
- **Extractor fans:** Usually the ventilation in your bathroom and kitchen will be provided by an extractor fan. Some turn on automatically when you switch the light on, others by a separate switch.
- **Open windows daily** for approximately 30 minutes, to allow a change of air, but make sure accessible windows will not cause a security problem and remember to close them when you go out.
- **Move items of furniture** away from external walls and radiators to allow the air to circulate.
- **Allow air to circulate** in wardrobes/drawers by not overfilling them.

Raise the temperature of your home

Whilst you don't want to waste money heating rooms you don't use, very cold rooms are more likely to get damp and mould.

Set the thermostatic radiator valve to one in unused rooms so the radiator gives out a little bit of heat whenever you have the heating on.

Take extra steps to prevent heat loss by fitting draught excluders to windows and doors, and use underlay under carpets.

The **World Health Organisation** recommends a minimum internal temperature of **18 degrees Celsius.**

Cold surfaces in your home and draught proofing

Condensation forms more easily on cold surfaces in the home such as external walls, ceilings and glazing. Where practical to help prevent heat loss to your loft, we will provide insulation in places like your loft and your external walls in the cavity.

Insulation will help to keep the whole house warmer and should help to reduce your fuel bills. When the whole house is warmer, mould growth becomes less likely.

Tackling Mould Growth

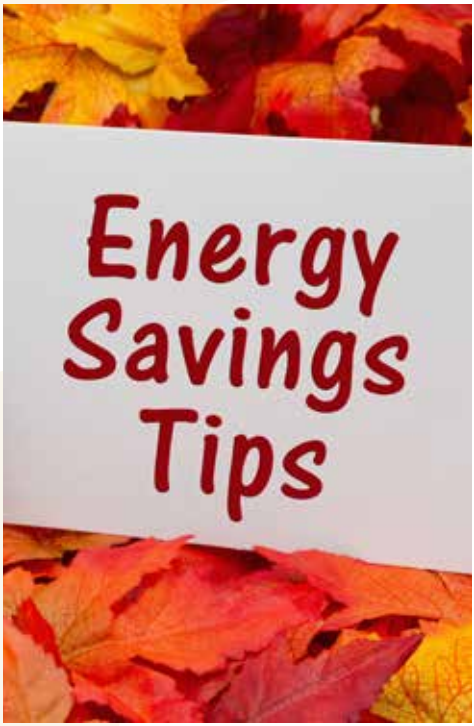
If you already have mould on your walls and/or ceiling, you need to clean it off properly. An effective method is to start by cleaning off the mould using a fungicidal wash which can be purchased from most hardware stores and on-line. This will help remove the staining that persistent mould can leave behind.

Leave to dry overnight and spray the affected area with an anti-fungal wash and allow that to dry.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and consider wearing a face mask when spraying. You could also treat the affected area with a mould resistant paint, available from most major hardware stores.

Sometimes mould is caused by something more serious such as water getting into the building through a structural fault or leak. For example, condensation doesn't leave a 'tide-mark' around its edges on walls and is only present in cold weather.

Some examples of what this may look like...



Ways to save energy and money at home...

- Turn the thermostat down by 1°C. You will hardly notice a difference and it could save you money on your energy costs.
- Shut curtains at dusk during the winter to keep the heat in.
- Open curtains in the day to allow natural solar gain.

Further Assistance

Helpful videos

You will find a suite of easy to follow video guides on our heating systems on our website. Our heating engineer talks you through each system and includes tips on how to make sure you're running your system efficiently.

If your problems with condensation and mould persist after following these guidelines, you should contact we to arrange for a Surveyor to visit your home to determine how we can combat the mould problem together.

If you are worried about affording your heating bills, please talk to us, as we may be able to help you.

Call **0345 677 2277** or email **customerservices @awen.co.uk**

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Scan the QR code to access the Awen website.

Please contact the **Corporate Services Team** on **01495 761104**, if you require this document in PDF, large-print, Welsh or any other language, braille or audio format.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. If you contact us in Welsh, we will respond in Welsh and this will not lead to a delay.

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