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Tips for keeping your home fresh and mould free

Unlike old draughty houses your home is a modern and well insulated property that is designed and built to keep the heat in and ensure that your heating energy costs are as low as possible. Keeping the heat in and draughts out can also mean that unless you take some simple steps to maintain a healthy atmosphere in your house, stale air, moisture and carbon dioxide can build up leading to a stuffy atmosphere and potentially mould growth on ceilings and walls.

If the moisture in the air (also known as Relative Humidity or RH%) within your house or apartment is high then your heating has to work harder to warm the air. Showering, cooking, laundry and even just breathing generates a lot of moisture and that goes into the air within your home. Unless managed properly damp air can mean higher energy bills and a less healthy living environment.

Here are some tips and tricks for keeping the air in your home fresh and keeping moisture at a decent level..

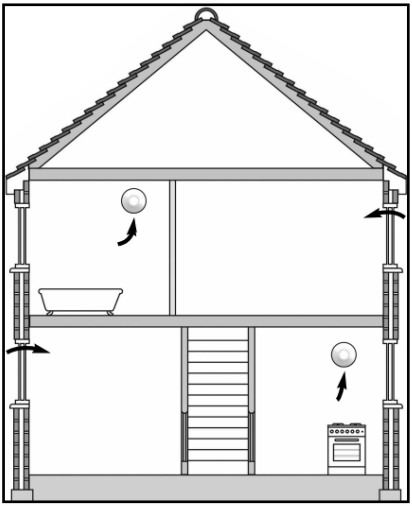
- Keep the extract fans in your kitchen and bathroom switched **ON** at all times. These fans are designed to run 24/7 and draw fresh air into the whole house, not just extract from the bathrooms and kitchen. They are very low power and they cost around £5/year to run. The fans also have a sensor in them that detects damp air and the fan boosts itself to extract more air when it detects excess moisture.

- **Trickle vents** – If your kitchen or bathroom has trickle vents on the windows like the one shown below then keep them **CLOSED** at all times. This may seem odd but what you want is the fan to draw air from the other parts of the house. If the vent is open it just draws air in from the vent and not the rest of the house. Keep the trickle vents **OPEN** on the windows in other rooms though. You only want to close the vents on rooms with a fan in it though.

- Open the window when having a bath or shower to let the steam out. Leave it open for 15-20 mins after you have finished showering to allow as much steam out as possible.

- Squeegee down the shower screen, wetwall and bath after showering. If you have a shower curtain shake as much water off it as possible and leave it open to dry quickly. There can be 150-250ml of water on the surfaces after showering. If it isn't squeegeed down the plug hole it evaporates into the atmosphere of your home.

- There should be an 8-10mm gap below the doors in your home. If there isn't then leave the kitchen and bathroom doors very slightly ajar when those rooms are not in use. This allows the fans to draw air in through the trickle vents in the other rooms and through the rest of the house.



- If you are drying washing in the house use a clothes horse and put it into a room, close the door and open the windows to allow the moisture out and the clothes to dry naturally. Alternatively put them in the bathroom with the window open or if the weather doesn't allow this then make sure that the extract fan is on. Try not to put damp clothes onto radiators. If you can afford one, put a dehumidifier in the room with the washing if the windows are shut.

- When cooking keep the lids on the pots to minimise steam generation - this can also reduce energy usage.

- Keep windows open when cooking to let steam out.

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- If you can, get some moisture/RH% meters for the house. You can get these on Amazon, ebay etc. They cost around £10 for a pack of 6. Ideally the moisture levels within the house should be between 45 and 65%RH when the temperature indoors is 19-21°C. Search for RH meter and you will find some like the one shown below. You don't want the RH to be to high but you don't want it to be too low either.

To explain all this in more detail there are numerous videos about this on YouTube. One we would recommend watching is Charlie DIYte. Search for

Charlie DIYte Why You Need to Keep Moisture Low

Other points that you should consider is

- ensuring that you do not have belongings piled up against walls, as this can encourage mould growth as air is unable to circulate
- regular vacuuming of flooring
- do not store belongings in the loft/ attic area. This causes insulation to move/ compress and this can lead to mould growth. These areas are not designed for storage

Following the above tips and tricks will hopefully help you to have a healthy home, free of issues and mould growth. If you see signs of mould growth or any other damp, please contact us at **hello@hhainverness.com** so that we can help.

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