

Dealing With Dampness in Your Home



When it comes to your home, a musty smell of dampness is definitely undesirable.

Dampness can produce mold on hard surfaces, mildew on soft surfaces, and potentially even lead to health or safety issues. But before dampness in your home can put a damper on your spirit, here's the 411 to help you detect it, deal with it, and avoid it in the future.

Identifying dampness

The geographical region of where you live could be a predictor for dampness in your home. Check with your Realtor or local public library for information on the humidity and rainfall in your area. Damp homes are often caused by an influx of water from the outside or by increased humidity from showering, drying clothes, and cooking. If water is entering your home from the outside, you may be able to determine where by looking for water tides on painted walls or white salt deposits (called efflorescence) on brick.

Dealing with dampness

If your home is showing signs of dampness, it is important to address these issues as quickly as possible to mitigate any significant damage or health issues. The first thing to do is locate the source of the problem. Check for obvious causes such as blocked gutters, missing tiles, objects stacked against an external wall, leaking pipes, or damage to your roof or foundation. If you cannot find the source, hire an expert to help. Once you have identified the problem, it is time to seal the deal. Depending on the complexity and severity of the problem, there may be some solutions you can take care of yourself (e.g. caulking a window to keep moisture out), whereas others may be better suited for a professional (e.g. fixing leaks to pipes or addressing foundation problems).

Avoiding dampness

Prevention is key. Here are some steps you can take to keep dampness away from your home:

Limit moisture during humid weather by keeping windows and doors closed. Use an air conditioner and/or dehumidifier to keep humidity below 60%. Ensure all vent fans are clear and connected directly outdoors and not to the attic.

Use exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathrooms to control humidity.

When possible, consider limiting the boiling time of water, covering saucepans when cooking, and discontinuing use of portable gas heaters. Position the downspout runoff so it's directed away from the foundation of your home.

Increasing or improving the insulation of your home and around pipes.

For the regional market highlights or to contact an agent please call:

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