

How can you get rid of excessive moisture in your home?

To lower your homes humidity levels, you need to increase ventilation and decrease the sources of moisture.

- Make sure you have good ventilation in high-humidity areas: bathrooms, the kitchen, laundry areas and in the basement.
- If you already have adequate exhaust fans and dehumidifiers in these areas, try running them for longer periods of time. For instance, put furnace fan in constant on position.
- Crack open a window occasionally for a source of dry fresh air.
- Open drapes, shutters, and shades every morning to allow free air flow across the surface of the windows.
- Take shorter showers and install water restricting faucets-you'll lower the humidity and your energy bills as well.
- Cook a little differently: Keep pots and pans covered to hold moisture in. Use your microwave instead of boiling on the stove. Slow cooking crock-pots are energy efficient and moisture-efficient, too.
- Check and reroute drainage away from your home, to minimize the moisture in and around your basement foundation.

How much humidity is the right amount?

You've probably heard that your home will feel warmer in the winter if the humidity is higher. That's true, and why many people use humidifiers to counteract dry, static filled air during the heating season.

In older homes, excess moisture usually isn't a problem because the structure

"breathes" through unsealed cracks and crannies in the construction, creating a regular exchange of outdoor and indoor air. That's why it is often a struggle to keep enough moisture in older homes.

But with today's modern construction techniques, homes are much tighter and energy-efficient. As a result, newer homes don't usually need a way to add moisture-they're more likely to have trouble getting rid of it.

So how much humidity is enough to keep us comfortable without dampening our surroundings? Refer to the chart for temperature and humidity levels that are generally considered comfortable.

Not sure what the humidity is inside your home? Ask a HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) contractor to measure it for you, or purchase an inexpensive humidistat from your local hardware store.

*Suggested Humidity Levels for Maximum Indoor Comfort**

Indoor <u>Air Temp</u>	Outdoor <u>Air Temp</u>	Suggested Maximum <u>Humidity</u>
70 F	-20 F	15%
70 F	-20 F to -10 F	20%
70 F	-10 F to 0 F	25%
70 F	0 F to 10 F	30%
70 F	10 F to 20 F	35%
70 F	20 F to 40 F	40%

* Source-University of Minnesota Engineering Department.

CONDENSATION AND FROST BUILD UP ON WINDOWS

Due to the tight construction of new homes, moisture can be trapped in many ways. This moisture can also be created by the use of kitchen appliances, laundry facilities, and bathroom facilities. There are several steps that can be taken to assist in reducing and controlling moisture.

1. If the wood around the windows gets wet, damp, or frosted, you need to dry this wood off.
2. Turn off or reduce the setting on any humidifier in the house.
3. Operate exhaust fans in the areas of high moisture input such as laundry rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms both while the area is in use, and long after to continue the air circulation. Do this on an as needed basis.
4. Ventilate the house briefly once a day.
5. Use a dehumidifier or contract to have an air to air exchanger installed to remove moisture in your house.
6. Increase the circulation of the air in the house by turning the fan switch to the ON position on the thermostat.
7. Reduce the moisture input into the house. (Showering, cooking, plants etc.)
8. Open window curtains every day.

If you follow the above recommendations, the problem can be reduced to a manageable level.