



# Dehumidifiers

Humidity and damp represent constant threats in homes and commercial environments. Moisture occurs in the air as a result of natural humidity but it can also be caused by leakage of ground or mains water through faulty walls and foundations, the use of cooking and heating appliances in poorly ventilated rooms and the steam produced by baths and showers.

## How Do I Know if I Need a Dehumidifier?

There are several signs to look out for. The most obvious visual ones are damp patches on walls, ceilings and floors, cracks in plaster accompanied by staining, signs of wood rot or flaking paint, spots of black mould on window frames or brickwork. In addition, you may experience physical reactions such as itching and watering eyes, sneezing and blocked nose, difficulty in breathing and skin irritation. These may be allergy-related or simply your body's response to damp conditions.

Unwanted moisture can cause damage to buildings and property as well as contributing to health problems, enabling mould to grow and creating an unpleasant, musty atmosphere. Modern construction methods incorporate the latest technology for eliminating or minimising moisture but even these are not 100% effective, and in older buildings, there is always the chance of damp invasion. The simplest action any householder can take is to use dehumidifying equipment.

## What Do Dehumidifiers Actually Do?

They work by drawing moisture from the air, passing it through a system of coils and collecting it in a tray before returning the dried air to the room. When the tray fills up you simply empty it.



If you experienced dehumidifiers when they were bulky and noisy then the idea of using one in your home, especially a bedroom dehumidifier, probably fills you with horror. Fortunately, advances in technology have enabled the development of smaller, quieter machines so that a modern bedroom dehumidifier will cause only minimal disturbance.

The capacity of the equipment you'll need depends on the size of the room as well as its relative humidity. A mini dehumidifier can extract about 400ml per day. A small dehumidifier can manage upwards of 500ml per day while a medium dehumidifier could comfortably remove 20 litres or more. A mini dehumidifier is ideal for the smallest spaces such as box rooms, while a small dehumidifier may be sufficient for modest-sized bedrooms. A medium dehumidifier will be required for larger living areas including sitting rooms or rooms that are heavily affected.

Cars too can struggle with moisture and often a car dehumidifier is the only way to dispel those misty clouds and maintain a healthy atmosphere. Moisture ultimately has nowhere to go but into the seats and carpets which can lead to the growth of mould. Regular use of a car dehumidifier can prevent this.



## What is Relative Humidity (RH)?

RH measures the percentage of moisture in the air based upon the ratio between the humidity present and the level needed to achieve saturation. Dehumidification is not designed to remove all humidity, just the level indicated by the RH.

## Where should I put my dehumidifier?

Stand it in the affected room near the worst area but keep it at least six inches away from walls and furniture so there is plenty of room for air to circulate around, into and out of the machine.

## Should I leave it on all the time?

This depends upon the extent of the problem but ideally, it should run for at least 12 hours a day. Don't forget to check and empty the water tray regularly.

## Cleaning and maintaining your dehumidifier

Keep the water tray clean using detergent or disinfectant, vacuum dust out of the intake and exhaust grilles, don't let anything block the airflow and don't expose it to very low temperatures. Replace the filter according to the instructions and whenever you switch it off, let it settle for at least 10 minutes before turning it back on. If in doubt, you may need professional advice.