

Improving your cold damp house

In this fact sheet:

- Steps to address cold and damp
- Whole house heating or ventilation systems

If your home is cold and damp, there are some basic steps you can take to dry out your home and keep the heat in.

Steps to address cold and damp

In order of priority, the steps are:

- Throw out any unflued gas heaters.
- Fix any leaks.
- Remove any vegetation or other obstruction keeping the sun off the house.
- Remove anything blocking under-floor vents.
- Remove soil in contact with the cladding.
- Reduce draughts by closing off fireplaces and large gaps, and draught-stopping ill-fitting doors and windows.
- If the soil under the floor is damp, stop water vapour rising into the house by laying plastic sheeting over it, well sealed to perimeter and piles.
- Remove water vapour at source in kitchen and bathrooms by installing range hood and extractor fans ducted to the outside. Duct clothes dryers to the outside.
- Improve ceiling insulation to at least R3, properly installed. Ideally, install the maximum insulation possible.
- Improve under-floor insulation to at least R1.5, properly installed. Ideally, install the maximum insulation possible.
- Improve windows with either snug-fitting curtains or secondary glazing film, or both.

The next step is to consider heating. Research shows that most homes will still need heating on top of insulation and draught-proofing. Fact sheet 'Introduction to heating your home' covers types of heaters and their pros and cons.

Tips for efficient heating

- Put heaters away from windows so they heat the room more effectively.
- Turn off heaters in rooms you're not using.
- Use the thermostat and timer on your heaters so they only come on when you need them and automatically switch off when they reach a certain temperature
- Use a heat transfer system to move heat from a central main heater to bedrooms, or use smaller spot heaters to warm bedrooms.
- Don't heat hallways; the heat will not get into bedrooms.

Whole house heating or ventilation systems

Some systems offer climate control (either ventilation or heating or both) for the whole house. These systems are mechanical or active – that is, they use electricity to run – and they are best suited for airtight homes. Fact sheet 'Whole house mechanical ventilation systems' covers recent research into the effectiveness of these systems.

For more information:

- See Fact sheets on
 - Introduction to heating your home
 - Keeping the heat in: Overview
 - Keeping the heat in: Insulation
 - Keeping the heat in: Draught-proofing
 - Keeping the heat in: Windows
 - Whole house mechanical ventilation systems
- Visit: <http://www.smarterhomes.org.nz/energy/heating/energy-saving-tips-for-home-heating/>