

DO YOU HAVE A DAMP & SMELLY BASEMENT?

—
HERE IS YOUR
SOLUTION.



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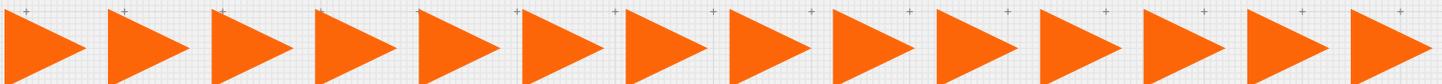
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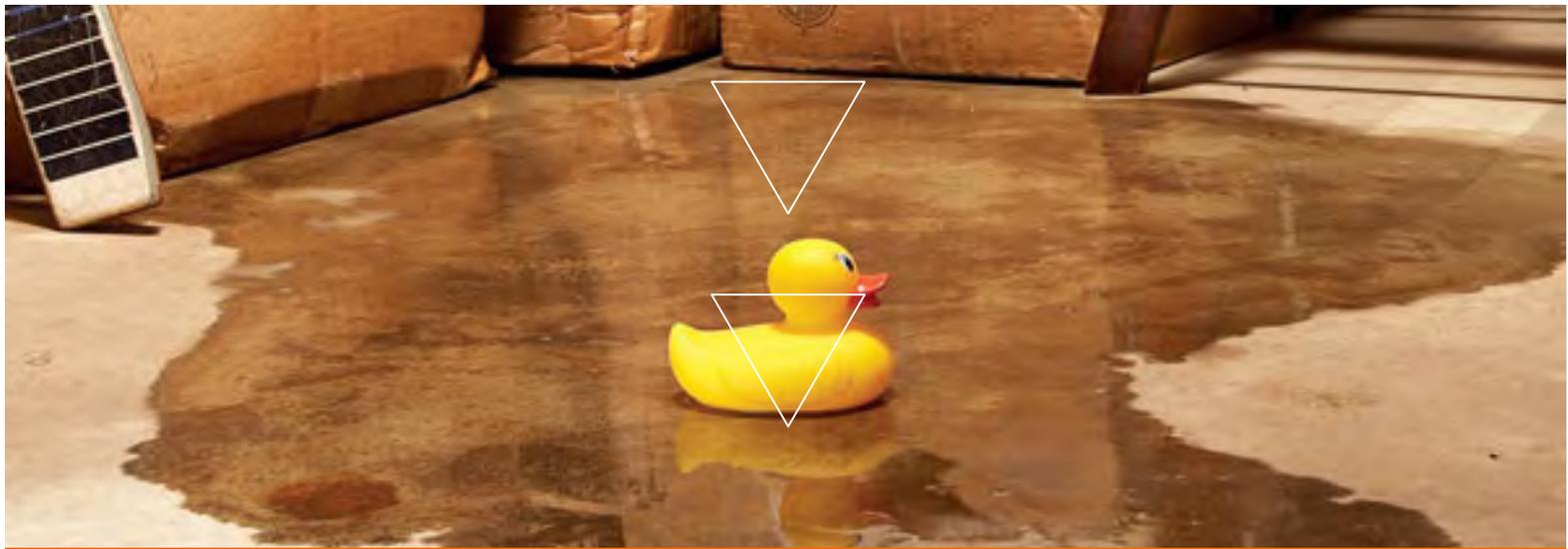
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*Do You Have
a*

Damp and Smelly Basement?

Basements are built entirely or partially underground; they are the base of your home. An underground room, whether finished or unfinished is naturally going to create dense moisture. The cold, moist earth surrounding all or some of your basement walls creates the perfect environment for a damp, musty room. Unfinished basements are especially prone to developing a moisture problem, and where moisture forms, mold and mildew are sure to follow, which creates a telltale odor. Removing the musty or mildew smell from your basement involves finding the moisture source and eliminating the problem.



Existing underground, your basement is naturally colder than the rest of your home. While cold air doesn't hold as much moisture as the warmer air in your upstairs living space, when the two temperatures of air mix, the moisture from the upper air condenses on the cooler surfaces and walls in the basement. Combine the darkness of the basement with cold, moist surfaces, and you will quickly develop a mold and odor situation. Dampness and odor can also occur when outside moisture leeches through the walls and floor of your basement.

There is a multitude of ways for moisture to find purchase in your basement, including cracks and gaps in the walls and concrete floor, broken seals around toilets or drains, and leaky pipes to name a few.

Whatever the source of moisture, if your basement has a distinct odor, resolve the issue before the smell permeates to the rest of the home. Fabric surfaces, clothes, carpets, books, etc., will all absorb and retain the smell, making it exceedingly difficult to remove it from your home.



CHAPTER 2

How to Locate the Source of the Odor

If your home is suffering from a damp and smelly basement, you need to first find the source of the odor before you can effectively remove the smell. Musty smells signal a mold problem, and mold is detrimental to your house and any possessions you have in the basement. The smell produced by moisture and mold is likewise damaging. Any absorbent materials present will soak up the odor, and it is difficult to remove even after the source is fixed. If your basement has a strong smell, the rest of your house is at risk.

1 If you have any drains-sink, floor, laundry tub, etc.-check these first. Basement drains need a constant level of water under the trap, or sewer gas will leak out of the drains. If you don't use the draining items regularly, the water will eventually evaporate, and the resulting sewer gas odor will move through the entire basement if left unchecked.

2 If your basement has a toilet check the water level inside the trap. The toilet has a similar issue as the drains; when the water below the trap evaporates, sewer gas is released into the basement, creating an odor. This situation is more common if the toilet has been inactive for some time. Toilets and toilet tanks can also spring a leak. Check the seal around the toilet and the body of the tank regularly.

3 Try checking your basement walls and floor for cracks. While not always immediately visible, if you find breaks, you might have seen your moisture and odor source. If rainwater and groundwater are getting into your basement, you have a severe problem and mold growth is sure to follow.

4 Loose fabric and fabric surfaces absorb significant amounts of moisture and if they're not cleaned regularly, can begin to smell. If your basement has a mystery odor, try smelling all the fabric pieces— everything from upholstered furniture, to clothing and old blankets.

5 A hidden leak from a pipe or your toilet or sink can cause a moisture problem in the basement that quickly grows mold. Look at the joints of every pipe, and the bowl and tank of the toilet for any dripping water or evidence of leaking.

CHAPTER 3

How to Spot Signs of Moisture in Basement



Basements are great storage spaces, and finished basements create new living space for a large or growing family, but a damp basement is a dangerous basement. Not only does moisture produce an odor, but it also creates a favorable environment for microbial growth. If mold spores take root in your moist basement, the house and potentially your health is at risk for damage.

WHETHER THE BASEMENT IS UNFINISHED OR FINISHED, KEEP AN EYE ON THE AREA FOR SIGNS OF MOISTURE:

You know to keep an eye on your basement walls, ceiling, and floor for mold, but also keep an eye on the furniture, books, and other possessions in the room. Any mold growth, even when it's not on the structure of the basement itself, is concerning. If your items were mold-free when you placed them downstairs, and now they're covered in mold, basement moisture is most likely the source. Remember, mold needs moisture to grow, so even if you haven't found any mold on the structure of the room, a sudden occurrence of mold on your possessions is a red flag.

Like mold, which appears in a variety of colors, look for a white, chalky material called efflorescence. Efflorescence is composed of mineral deposits that form around cracks and other openings that experienced a water intrusion. Efflorescence itself isn't harmful, but what it signals is. Efflorescence is a perfect indicator of cracks in your walls and floor, enabling you to find breaks you otherwise would have missed.

If you do find cracks in the foundation and walls, there is potential that rainwater or groundwater is entering the basement. Even if you don't immediately see any water seepage, cracks need to be fixed to prevent future water intrusions.

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It should be evident that your basement walls must always stand perfectly straight, but if you do notice any bowing or bulging, no matter how slight, you're in need of quick repairs. Bowing, bulging or leaning of your walls is typically from excess pressure placed on them by the ground around the foundation. The soil pressure pushes outward onto your basement walls, causing the foundation to shift, bowing the walls. Bowed walls are more apt to allow water and moisture into the basement.

Water stains on the walls are a classic sign of a moisture problem. A mark on the wall that indicates water ran down it can mean water is entering the basement from above ground. This is typically caused by grading problems and other exterior water issues. Where there's one water stain, there's more. Fix the problem as soon as you find it.



Chapter 4

HEALTH EFFECTS OF A DAMP INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

A musty smell is a cause for concern, often signaling the presence of mold, which can create severe health problems for your family. But it's not just the mold that can affect your health. A damp indoor environment has been linked to upper respiratory tract symptoms, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In 2004, the Institute of Medicine, now the Health and Medicine Division, found evidence to link the two, stating that dampness inside the home can cause a cough and wheeze in healthy individuals, and asthma symptoms in those with asthma. Additionally, they found a link between "exposure to damp indoor environments in general to shortness of breath, to respiratory illness in otherwise healthy children and to potential development of asthma in susceptible individuals."



Mold, of course, has a long-standing history of making individuals ill in its presence. While some individuals experience a wide variety of health symptoms in the presence of mold or a damp indoor environment, others experience nothing. If you are sensitive to mold, however, you may develop congestion, throat, eye or skin irritation, coughing or wheezing. If you have a full-blown allergy to mold, the reaction may be more severe and if you are immune-compromised or have a chronic lung illness, you could get an acute infection in your lungs when exposed to mold and should avoid any potentially moldy areas.

10 SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE

- headaches
- chronic sinus infection
- Fatigue
- eye irritation
- skin rash
- chronic coughing
- hair loss
- light sensitivity
- memory loss
- muscle & joint pain

Other Signs of Mold Include:

- black, white grey or green patches of growth
- stale, damp odor



Chapter 5

TIPS FOR REDUCING MOISTURE IN DAMP BASEMENTS

If your basement is damp with an odor and you've located the source, it's time to fix the problem. A musty smell is a sign of a moisture problem and mold growth, both of which can have a damaging effect on your home and your health. A damp, smelly basement should never be ignored. As soon as you realize there is a problem, you need to locate the source and work on a plan to fix it.

If your basement is damp with an odor and you've located the source, it's time to fix the problem. A musty smell is a sign of a moisture problem and mold growth, both of which can have a damaging effect on your home and your health. A damp, smelly basement should never be ignored. As soon as you realize there is a problem, you need to locate the source and work on a plan to fix it.

The key to removing unwanted dampness and odor is to lower the moisture level.

Drains-If the drains in the basement are the culprit, pour water into the pipe to replenish the trap. This will prevent sewer gas from leaking into the basement.



Cracks-Even if you haven't noticed water seeping in through the cracks yet, wall and floor breaks will never heal on their own and may get worse. Find a professional to seal the cracks before the problem gets out of hand.



Fabric-Any fabric in the basement that has taken on a musty odor needs proper cleaning and airing out above ground. If the smell isn't coming out, it may need to be thrown away.



Pipes-If you find a leaky pipe, toilet or sink, you'll need a professional to repair it. Hidden and long-term leaks can cause severe damage to your home. Check for, and correct these often. 12

Waterproofing-Use a company who specializes in basement waterproofing. They seal every crack and gap, preventing external moisture from leaking into the basement.

Downspouts, French drains, and grading-If your landscaping is subpar, it could become a source of moisture in the basement. Extend your downspouts, install a French drain, and fix the grading of your yard to divert rainwater from your foundation.

Dryer vent-If your dryer is currently venting into your basement, it's probably causing a significant amount of moisture. Find a contractor who can change the vent location or try a DIY approach. Removing the vent from the basement will go a long way towards reducing the moisture.

Windows and doors-If your basement includes a window or is a walkout basement with a door, open them wide and place a backward fan in them. Rather than forcing outdoor air into the basement, a backward fan will push the moist basement air outside.

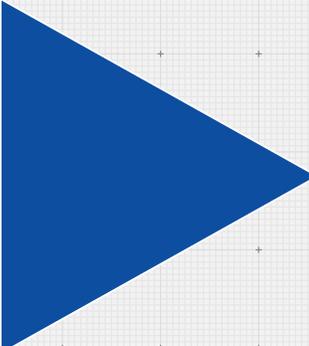
Dehumidifier-Whether you did some, all or none of these tips, install a dehumidifier in the basement to remove the excess moisture from the air.



Once you have the moisture issue under control, you can remove the musty smell. A dehumidifier will remove the moisture and lessen the smell, and an air purifier will take the odor out of the room and pump out clean air. Avoid ozone generators at all costs. They sound good, but they are damaging to your lungs.

You can also use activated carbon, baking soda, coffee grounds, odor-control cat litter, and other odor removers to pull the smell from the air.

Even after you've fixed the moisture source, if there is still mold, there will be a smell. Try to fix the moisture and the mold at the same time, if you can. Certified Mold Inspectors (CMI) and Certified Mold Remediation Contractors (CMRC) find every place the mold has grown and remove it from the house. The right CMI will check your entire home, not just the basement. Mold is a pervasive fungus, so even if you've only ever seen it in the basement, it may have spread to the upstairs living space.



**ARE YOU CONCERNED
ABOUT THE MOISTURE IN
YOUR BASEMENT?**

GET A PROFESSIONALS OPINION WITH A
**FREE MOISTURE CONTROL
ASSESSMENT**

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