

Considering how much you have to think about as a homeowner, the idea that you should monitor home humidity levels is likely at the end of the list. Things like radon levels, carbon monoxide and energy efficiency feel like top of mind home quality issues. While we agree, there are still many reasons you shouldn't ignore your home's humidity level either!

Too low or too high humidity levels can cause many long-term health and safety issues. Read on to learn about the importance of indoor humidity and why you should monitor your home's levels.

## Two Types of Humidity

There are [two types of humidity](#) you need to know about to gauge and understand proper humidity levels in home spaces.

### 1. Absolute Humidity

Absolute humidity is defined as the total amount of water vapor in the air. If the amount of water vapor is high, then the absolute humidity is high.

### 2. Relative Humidity

Relative humidity is the percentage of water vapor in the air considering the temperature. As in, the relative humidity measurement depends on how much water vapor *can* be in the air at that specific temperature. It takes into account how much the space or atmosphere can hold.

These two humidity types are important to know when gauging home humidity levels. An easy way to think about it: absolute humidity is how it feels outside, and relative humidity is the level inside your temperature-controlled home.

## Signs of Abnormal Humidity Levels

There are a couple key symptoms to pay attention to that signal indoor humidity problems. Physical symptoms like itchy eyes and dry skin are good indicators of low humidity levels. Whereas symptoms like trouble breathing, frequent headaches and problems sleeping are indicators of high humidity.

If you notice musty odors or mildew crawling up walls or where heavy furniture is placed, or if the space has window condensation on the inside—you have high home humidity.

## Low Humidity Issues

If your home's humidity level is low, you may have certain home integrity issues. Without enough moisture in the air, wood becomes brittle. So, low humidity levels can cause hardwood floors to crack and split. Low levels can also damage your expensive wooden furniture and priceless antique pieces.

If your home's relative humidity level remains low on a consistent basis, wallpaper can peel away and beloved house plants will die. Another low humidity issue is increased static electricity. Have you been zapped frequently when touching metal fixtures? This increased static electricity can damage electrical appliances.

## High Humidity Issues

When discussing the ideal humidity level in home spaces, high humidity is often thought to be the most pressing issue. That's because house problems caused by [high humidity](#) are easier to see.

Excess humidity facilitates the growth of mold and mildew. Black spots on walls and behind furniture, are ugly and dangerous. As mold and mildew grow on your walls, they can also cause furniture like your sofa or and bed to take on a terrible smell. High humidity can cause permanent damage to your upholstered furniture. Elevated humidity levels can also cause plaster and stucco materials to degrade and crumble, and rot wooden floors and furniture.

Even costlier, high humidity issues damage the integrity of your home's walls and foundation. High indoor relative humidity can cause the walls of your home to expand and contract, which could lead to big cracks.

## Health Impact

There are many adverse health effects if your home or space's humidity level doesn't fall within the ideal range. Whether high or low, [indoor air quality](#) is a huge health factor.

### Low Humidity

Low indoor relative humidity levels can cause or exacerbate respiratory issues. Conditions like asthma and chronic bronchitis inflame in low humidity. Low relative humidity also causes cracked skin, chapped lips, nose bleeds and itchy eyes. More seriously, viruses can survive for longer periods of time in drier air.

### High Humidity

High relative humidity levels also have dire health effects. Increased levels can cause an increase in bacteria and mold, because these particles thrive in humid settings. Bacteria and mold cause harmful respiratory issues and can lead to dangerous disease spread. Such pathogens spread quickly in high relative humidity.

Other harmful pollutants like dust mites also spread easily in high humidity levels. Dust mites thrive specifically in bedding, carpets and furniture. They multiply in a rapid fashion and can cause respiratory issues and rashes.

## Ideal Humidity Range for Homes

To monitor home humidity levels, it's important to keep in mind the ideal indoor relative humidity range of [40-60%](#). This sweet spot allows for the right amount of moisture in the home to protect against structural damage. This level has also been determined to be the ideal range where disease and mold have the least possibility to grow and spread.

Changing seasons often bring challenges for maintaining healthy humidity levels. Humidity levels in the winter means lower than normal levels. While in the summer, humidity tends to run high. This is of course also dependent on location and specific climate region.

Though there are many temporary home remedies to combat both low and high humidity levels, consulting an HVAC or IAQ technician to install a [central air monitor](#), whole-home humidifier, or whole-home dehumidifier is the best

route to maintain safe levels year-round. These products help monitor home humidity levels.

The benefit of whole-home [dehumidifiers](#) and [humidifiers](#) is that they work with your home's existing system and install directly to the HVAC system. This means you'll see humidity and air quality improvements with a low-maintenance and low-worry upgrade. Whole-home humidification systems have humidistats that are constantly monitoring home levels and able to regulate to the ideal range before you notice a problem.

## You Need to Fix Home Humidity Levels

Home humidity levels that are too high or too low are harmful to the health of you, your family and your space. Not only can abnormal levels cause long-term health issues, but they also degrade the structural integrity of your house.

You have a lot to worry about as a homeowner, don't let your humidity levels be one of them. IAQ upgrades help you monitor home humidity levels with ease. We can help you determine what works for your home.