

HOW TO ALLERGY-PROOF YOUR HOME



INTRODUCTION

If you're the sort of person who suffers from allergic reactions – whether they be a mere annoyance or severely debilitating – then you'll want to know how to keep those nasty allergens out of your home. After all, your home should be a place where you're able to relax – and you can't well do that if you're ceaselessly coughing and spluttering, your eyes are inflamed and streaming, and your skin is itching uncontrollably.

These dangers are all the more acute at certain times of the year. Obviously, there's the danger of pollen during spring and summer – but winter, too, poses its share of threats. There are dust mites and mould lurking in the corners of your living space, both of which are potential allergens. And if you're allergic to animal hair, then the threat posed by your household pets may be greater during the winter – when both dogs and cats are likely growing thicker coats to cope with the elements.

Thankfully, there exist a myriad of different ways in which we can remain protected against the elements. In this article, we'll take a look through the ways to allergy-proof your home. Let's begin, shall we?

CONTROL MOISTURE LEVELS

One of the biggest dangers posed by allergies during the winter is the risk of an infection. This risk is more severe at this time of year, as we're cranking up our heating, and thereby drying out the air. This in turn will dry out our noses, eyes and skin, which will make them much less well-equipped to repel nasty pathogens. The end result of this cycle is often an infection.

So how can we counteract this problem? Well, the most obvious solution is the direct one – apply moisturiser to the affected areas. If it's the inside of your nose, then you might consider a specially-formulated saline rinse. If it's your skin, then a general moisturiser will do – though you'll have to shop carefully, according to your body's foibles.

You might alternatively invest in a humidifier. This will help to counteract the drying-out effect of your heater. But you'll have to be cautious, here – many allergens thrive in high humidities, and during winter, introducing too much moisture to your house can cause it long-term damage. It's best to keep things conservative, and to keep the humidity setting at lower than 50%.

KEEP YOUR CARPET CLEAN

As well as keeping yourself properly moisturised, you'll need to wage war on the allergens directly. Unfortunately, there are many places where they might take residence.

If your house is filled with lush, thick carpets, then you'll provide dust mites with exactly the environment they need to grow and multiply. Now, you might want to dispense with such carpets altogether, and opt instead for hardwood floors, punctuated by the occasional rug. But if you're wedded to that velvety, cushioned sensation underfoot, then you should make sure that you properly maintain your carpet through regular vacuum cleaning, and the odd wash every now and again.

KEEP YOUR BED CLEAN

The same is also true of your bed. Between those sheets, a million dust mites can take up residence. Your bed is warm, moist and filled with your dead skin cells – upon which these tiny arachnids will subsist. And these mites can be remarkably

difficult to excise once they've gotten in there – they can survive for months on end, and a female can lay more than a thousand eggs every week.

For this reason, you'll need to regularly launder your bedsheets at a high temperature. This will help to destroy all of your dead skin cells, and thereby rob dust mites of their food supply.

If you're looking for a permanent solution, however, you should consider investing in a hypoallergenic bedsheets, like this one. These control the mite population of your bed by forming a barrier between the sleeping person and the mattress. These covers are far more tightly-woven than ordinary sheets – so much so that the holes are smaller than a 300-micron-wide dust mite. Faced with this lack of food, the mite population in your bed will decline rapidly – as will the allergic symptoms they produce. Just install the sheet and wait for the mites to die.

When they were first introduced in the middle of the 20th century, hypoallergenic covers were not as sophisticated as they are today. They were basically made from sheet plastic, and provided a horrible night's sleep. Modern versions are much more agreeable – and will provide allergy-sufferers a means of doing battle against this microscopic foe.





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