

In humid conditions, mold and mildew can thrive on leather, wood and upholstered furniture. Over time, these fungi can reduce the aesthetic value of furniture and give off an unpleasant, musty odor. Cleaning and preventing mold and mildew growth will eliminate these problems, as well as protect your family against harmful allergens.

Consider the Source

Examine your home to determine what factors are contributing to mold and mildew growth. If you have just taken the furniture out of storage, you can assume that being in an enclosed, damp space caused the mold growth. If, however, the furniture began to grow mold in your living space, you should examine the ceiling, windows and floorboards for cracks and leaks that might introduce moisture to your furniture. If necessary, hire a home repair service to fill in cracks and prevent future damage.

Hot and Cold

In some cases, mold and mildew can grow because air temperature is not uniform. When hot and cold air meets, they cause water particles to condense on furniture surfaces, contributing to mold and mildew growth. This problem is difficult to detect, so consider hiring a home ventilation expert to assess the temperature of your home and offer potential solutions. If you live in a humid climate, purchase a high-quality dehumidifier and plan to check your furniture for mold growth regularly in the future.

Remove or Clean?

Porous materials like upholstery and foam are more likely to retain mold particles. If your upholstery already has mold damage, throw it out to prevent future mold problems. Contact a reupholstering service if you wish to salvage a valuable wood or metal frame. Furniture made out of slightly porous materials like leather or wood usually retain their structural integrity and are only subject to superficial mold growth. Likewise, you can clean inorganic materials like plastic and metal with little effort.

Leather Furniture

Cleaning mold and mildew from leather furniture will release spores and other particles into the air, so it's best to take furniture outside on a dry, sunny day before cleaning it. Be sure to wear eye protection, gloves and a facemask to protect yourself from allergens while you clean. Use a stiff, plastic brush to scrape off any visible surface mold. Wipe the leather down

with a 1:1 mixture of water and denatured alcohol. Spray it with a leather-safe fungicide and allow it to dry thoroughly in the sun.

Harder Surfaces

Hard surfaces can withstand more intensive cleaning. Wear goggles, a mask and gloves to protect you from the mold. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to remove surface mold. Mix water and a non-ammonia detergent together and scrub the entire surface. Use a non-abrasive scrubber to avoid damaging the wood finishes. Wipe the detergent mixture off. Mix 1/4 cup bleach with 1 gallon of water and spray all surfaces. Leave the mixture on for at least 6 hours, and then move the furniture outside to dry in the sunlight.