

**Like many basements, mine (a finished one) is musty in smell. There are no signs of mould that I can see. Is this normal or do I have to buy a de-humidifier?**

Is it normal, NO, but in many older homes, quite common.

A de-humidifier will only reduce the atmospheric humidity level to about 60% and these machines are quite costly to operate. The musty smells you are asking about could be caused by many things, usually moisture related. They are often unpleasant. Your best remedy is to **ventilate, ventilate, ventilate**. Try opening a window at each end of your basement and place a fan in one of the windows blowing out. This should create a flow of fresh air through the basement. With time this will reduce the humidity levels and hopefully that musty smell. To go one step further make certain that the grade around your home is sloped away from the house. Direct your downspouts to at least five feet from any exterior wall. It is very important to keep moisture away from the home's foundation. I hope this helps.

Peter Weeks has been a Chelsea resident for 15 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing residential home inspections for about one year. He is an associate member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB. **He is a Qualified and Fully Insured Inspector**. Forward your question to , Peter at [pwhi@sympatico.ca](mailto:pwhi@sympatico.ca) or by phone at 290.3697 .