



# Tips for a Dust-Free Room

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## Serious Allergies SERIOUS RESPONSE

Dust is everywhere and can't be controlled by ordinary housecleaning methods. Dust enters rooms through windows and spaces around window frames. Old dust, which is the most allergenic, can spread throughout the house when you vacuum or dust. And many heating and cooling systems circulate dust, as well.

Certain items like pillows, mattresses, box springs, bedding, stuffed furniture, rugs, and curtains break down over time, becoming dust and collectors of mite allergens. While it's impossible to control all dust in the home or place of work, the bedroom can be easiest to control through focused cleaning methods and dust-prevention techniques.

## Furnishings RECOMMENDATIONS & CARE

- **Avoid** shag, chenille, or any other textiles with noticeable texture. Carpet pads that contain animal hairs, coarse vegetable fibers, or animal glue. Toys with animal hair covers and any that are stuffed with feathers, sawdust, or hair.
- **Use** a bed frame and other bedroom furniture made of metal or wood. Synthetic fiber rugs that are washed at least weekly. Plain light curtains can be used on the windows, but must be washed once per week. If the allergic person is a child, only use washable toys that have non-allergenic covers and stuffing that can be heat dried thoroughly to prevent mold growth.
- **Remove** upholstered furniture, stuffed toys or toys that accumulate dust, and drapes. Furniture which contains allergenic dust should be removed from the house. If that's not possible, each piece should be frequently and thoroughly vacuumed when the allergic person is out of the house and the house should be aired thoroughly afterwards. If you want to keep questionable furniture it should be sealed with a dust-proof plastic cover.

## Dust-Proofing

There are dust-proofing products available which help stop dust formation on furniture, rugs, blankets, and drapes. Using this type of product in the dust-free room and throughout the home is recommended. This will diminish old dust and help stop the formation of new dust. These products are easily applied with spray equipment or simple spray bottles.

## Air Quality RECOMMENDATIONS & CARE

Use asthma and allergy specific air filters in your central furnace and air conditioning unit. Free standing air cleaners are another option, however they only treat a limited area. Adding one to your dust-free room is beneficial and recommended.



## Preparing the Dust-Free Room

### Cleaning & Removal Tips

To start, remove furniture, decor, and soft goods like pillows, bedding, rugs, carpeting, and curtains/drapes. Empty all closets and store clothes and shoes in another room. If that's not possible, you can keep clothing meticulously clean and dust-free by storing them in plastic bags or garment bags. Be sure that all clothes that have been put away are well aired before wearing them. Shoes can be kept in boxes off the floor. Below are some strategies to help you clean and prepare your dust-free room:

- **Seal** all furnace pipes leading into the room, leaking window sills, and drafts.
- **Clean** ceilings, walls, and floors with soap and water including inside closets. Scrub the bed frame with soap and water, then dry with a lint-free rag. Wash any mold on the walls or window sills with soap, water, and household bleach or a potent mold inhibitor. Clean woodwork, radiators and vent covers.
- **Wax** all floor space. Linoleum, tile or wood is the best flooring option for dust allergies, especially in bedrooms.

### Bedding Recommendations & Care

- **Mattress & Box Spring** – The box spring and/or mattress should be covered with dust-proof coverings. If left uncovered, make sure to vacuum them weekly. If you live in a humid climate where mold can grow on rubber or synthetics, covers may be necessary.
- **Pillows** – Use latex or synthetic pillows with an allergen-proof case. Avoid feather, kapok, or down pillows.
- **Sheets & Blankets** – Use freshly washed cotton bedding, sheets, and pillow cases. Use cotton, polyester, or other synthetic fiber blankets. Some smooth wool blankets may work, but only when the nap is unnoticeable and it is woven from 100% wool fibers. Avoid quilts, comforters or mattress pads. A cotton blanket folded in half is a good alternative for a mattress pad. Wash bedding weekly in hot water that is at least 130° F. If a dust-proofing product is rinsed in water, it can help reduce lint, airborne particles, and reduce house dust mites.

## General Maintenance

### Cleaning Recommendations & care

The dust-free room must be cleaned daily with an oiled or damp cloth. It also needs a thorough and complete cleaning once per week. Make sure the allergic person isn't in the room during the cleaning. If possible, keep the room for sleeping only and dress in another room. Always brush clothes and shoes before entering the bedroom since they can carry in allergenic pollens, molds and dust. Keep the doors and windows of the bedroom closed as much as possible, especially when not using the room. An air conditioner may be needed during the summer to keep the room comfortable for sleeping. Consider using a dehumidifier to keep humidity below 45%, below 35% is better,<sup>1</sup> to help prevent mold growth and dust mites.

Pets such as dogs, cats, and birds may contribute to dust allergies and should be kept out of the house. Avoid using insect sprays or powders. And don't use strong-smelling substances like insect sprays, tar, room deodorants, etc.

#### References

1. *Mold Allergy*, (n.d.) Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America. Retrieved July 19, 2021 from <https://www.aafa.org/mold-allergy>.