

## Seven Smart Strategies to Dust-Proof Your Home

(ARA) - It's a common complaint. Just a few days after a thorough house cleaning, that unsightly dust is back, settling on every surface in your house. Dust can also contribute to respiratory allergy suffering. Although the visible dust is most obvious, health scientists now say it is the very small invisible particulates and noxious gases we should be most worried about. What's the answer? Here are a few proven ways to greatly reduce dust and breathe easier in your home.

### *Identify and Seal Air Leaks That Let In Dirty Air*

A good deal of the dust in our homes comes from internal sources such as skin flakes and fabric fibers. However, new research has found that in many homes a significant amount of the dust actually originates from outside the living space. The hot or cold outside air that leaks in through gaps and cracks often brings a lot of dust along with it. The air from outside always contains airborne particles such as mold spores, pollen, soot, tire rubber and agricultural dust.



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### *Fix Negative Air Pressure*

Many homes operate under what is called "negative air pressure," created unintentionally by the mechanical systems. The air pressure becomes lower in the home than outside. This accelerates the inward flow of potentially dusty outdoor air, and can even back up furnace and water heater chimneys, allowing poisonous carbon monoxide gas into the home. Ask your HVAC contractor to test your home for negative air pressure and proper venting of gas and oil appliances.

### *Upgrade Your Central Air Filter*

Typical throw away furnace filters do not even adequately protect your equipment from getting fouled up, let alone protect you from invisible respirable particles. Ask your HVAC contractor for recommendations on installing a new high efficiency filter at the equipment. One of the best are pleated media filters, typically four to six inches thick, that only need to be changed once a year. Have your HVAC contractor first test the duct system static pressure to ensure your system can handle the increased pressure created by a good filter.

### *Get Your Duct System Cleaned*

Many duct systems contain large amounts of dust and debris. If you get your ducts cleaned, be sure the contractor thoroughly cleans the furnace/air handler and cooling coil as well. Note that if you have dirt accumulating on the supply air vents, the cause is most likely duct leaks in the vicinity, not dirt from inside the ducts. A good sealed duct system, with filtration at the inlets, rarely if ever needs cleaning.

Follow these steps and you can make a big difference in the dust levels in your home. For more free information on solutions to improving indoor air quality, visit [www.comfortinstitute.org](http://www.comfortinstitute.org) and [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).