

Cool Bathroom Tips eBook

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING RENOVATING YOUR BATHROOMS MAKE SURE YOU READ THIS EBOOK!



CONTAINING USEFUL GUIDELINES AND TIPS – IT IS FREE AND AN INVALUABLE TOOL!

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Creating a new bathroom can be a rewarding yet challenging undertaking.

Use this book as a guideline to help you create a beautiful and practical space where you can relax and rejuvenate (or rush in and out when required!).

This book covers the critical considerations for renovating your bathroom.

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10 Point Checklist

When commissioning someone to design your bathroom for you, it helps if you have considered some of the following questions:-

1. Who will be using the bathroom?
 - Number of adults
 - Number of children

2. When is the bathroom primarily used?
 - Early morning rush hour
 - To relax at the end of a long day
 - On weekends to relax in the tub
 - Will guests use the bathroom? (If so storage to hide personal items is critical).

3. What type of look are you after?
 - Modern
 - Minimalistic
 - Heritage
 - Colour scheme
 - Texture of finishes

4. Which bathroom products do you wish to incorporate in your plan?
 - Type of toilet (wall hung, close coupled, link)
 - Tapware
 - Basin/s
 - Vanity and/or shaving cabinets
 - Mirrors
 - Bath
 - Shower area
 - Accessories (toilet roll holder, towel rails, soap dispensers, etc)

5. Storage – does the bathroom need to be able to store :-
 - towels and washers
 - toiletries
 - medicine
 - kid's toys

6. Consider the properties and look of tiles you are after. Some tiles are higher maintenance than others and some can become slippery when wet.
7. How will you keep warm in winter?
 - Underfloor heating
 - Heated towel rails
 - Mounted wall heated
 - Light heaters in ceiling
8. Where is your lighting coming from?
 - Natural lighting (windows, glass bricks)
 - Lights in underside of cabinetry
 - Downlights in ceiling
 - Heat lights
9. Make sure there is adequate ventilation for your bathroom
 - Windows
 - Exhaust fans
10. What sort of showerscreen do you wish to install?
 - Frameless, semi-frameless or framed?

Layout Guidelines

- Determine the room dimensions, positions of existing doors, windows, and skylights. Don't be afraid to alter any of these if this can be of benefit, you will appreciate it in the long run.
- Room dimensions will dictate what fixtures and fittings you can incorporate in your design and your choice of tiles.
- Decide if the bathroom will be part of a larger room or area (such as a master bedroom or poolside 'wet area') or a self-contained space.
- Will you be restructuring the space? For example, altering the floor or ceiling, removing or adding internal walls, installing a sunken bath or embedding fixtures into walls, floor or ceiling cavities, altering a hinged door to a sliding door.
- Placing windows near the ceiling will free up wall space for your storage needs.
- If your bathroom is to incorporate laundry facilities it may require additional power and plumbing outlets.
- Determine how much cavity space there is to work within the walls, ceiling, and under-floor area. This may affect the type, configuration and positioning of pipes, wires and fittings.
- Will you need to change existing plumbing or wiring to accommodate the new design?
- Determine how the downtime for renovations will affect your day-to-day life and organise how to best plan. For example, hire a portaloos or bathe at your local gym or neighbour's house.
- You will need to establish the minimum requirements for space around your bathroom.
 - Allow at least 600mm in front of the toilet and approximately 200mm either side of the bowl.

- 700mm should be allowed between the front of the basin and the nearest wall or object.
 - Power points should be located at least 500mm from splash zones.
 - Shower recesses should be at least 900 x 900mm square, however this is a minimum and more space is recommended if available.
 - The average bath is approximately 1700mm long, 800mm wide and 400mm deep.
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- Where you position fixtures will greatly affect the renovation cost, so working with an expert to plan your layout makes a lot of sense - particularly before any renovating begins.
 - The look you create should ultimately be decided by your taste, lifestyle, available space and budget. Ideally you want something that complements the design throughout the rest of the home. Once you have a style or theme in mind, think about how each fitting and fixture will integrate to complement the total effect you're trying to achieve.
 - The most important thing you need to consider when planning your bathroom is your lifestyle needs for today and in the future. Consider :-
 - If you lead a busy lifestyle, a simple uncluttered bathroom will be easier to keep clean.
 - Will you require a separate bath and shower? These can be integrated to save space.
 - With a family, practicality is important so durable fittings and fixtures are essential.
 - Carefully plan the position of fixtures so access won't be a problem when sharing.
 - In a busy bathroom, installing two basins may make more sense.
 - With young children surfaces should be smooth and edges rounded.
 - Temperature limiting valves will help to make the environment safer.
 - Does anyone in the home have special needs? Specific fittings may be required.

Selecting Tiles

- Consider the texture of tiles you like. Do you want shiny, polished tiles or do you prefer a matt look ? Ask the tile retailer to explain the properties of your tiles – some are more slippery when wet, some require more maintenance to keep them looking good, whilst others are more porous and will absorb stains. Tiles also have different durability.
- Make sure you buy enough tiles for wastage when laying and also to have few spare. Most tiles are made in batches and each batch will vary slightly from the other. Later on if you do need to replace some tiles you will have the exact colour on hand. Matching tiles a few years later is almost impossible.
- The tiles you pick will be a large factor in the colour of the room. The right colours will accentuate the mood of your bathroom. Light tones can help to make a small room appear larger. If practicality is important, avoid stark whites that are difficult to keep clean. If you wish to incorporate a darker colour within your bathroom, consider a feature wall with a series of lighter walls around it to provide contrast. Updating colour is much easier with paint than tiles, so consider only tiling the wet areas and leaving some walls to paint.
- If tiling to the ceiling, consider how you will finish the tiles to the top. Are you having cornice? If so do you like the look where the cornice sits over the tiles or flush with the tiles? Attention to details such as this will make your bathroom renovation.
- What colour grout are you going to use? There are many colours available but the most popular are white, off-white and grey. This suits most tiles. Some people like to colour match grout with the tiles if this is you, get your tile shop to source the colour. Be aware if you are matching grout with tiles, the tile line will not be as definitive or clear.
- Larger tiles create a sense of space while smaller tiles are good to use as a feature.

- If considering large tiles in too small a space, more cuts will be required to get the appropriate fall in the floor.
- Boarder tiles can add a stunning feature – consider vertical boarders to accentuate the room depth.
- Consider cleaning properties – some tiles and grout collect more mould and mildew than others. Ask you tiler and tile shop about products to use which minimise this.
- How will your tiles be laid vertical or horizontal? Vertical lines add height to a room by drawing the eye upwards.
- Smart tiles are becoming increasingly popular as an alternative to chrome floor wastes. These have a sleek look and suit modern renovations.

Vanities and Shaving Cabinets

- Storage space is often the least considered element when designing a bathroom, yet it quickly becomes obvious when you don't have enough of it. Consider getting cabinetry custom-made to suit your space, look and requirements. Think about what you need to store (medicine, towels, toiletries, toys) and make sure you can neatly store these.
- Custom made cabinets can incorporate any basin you like without being restricted to the basin sold in a pre-made unit.
- Consider how you would like your basin to sit in the vanity. Do you want it to sit on top like a vessel, or slung underneath or to sit semi-recessed ? Think about the practicalities of space and who will be using the basin.
- What material do you wish to have for your cabinetry? Consider moisture properties and the look you are trying to achieve. Do you want high gloss cabinets or hand painted? What sort of benchtop do you want? Stone looks better and is more durable than plastic which can scratch.
- Floating cabinets give the illusion of more space. Consider these when you have a smaller bathroom.
- Mirrored shaving cabinets without handles are a popular streamlined choice. Sometimes this will eliminate the need to have a vanity cabinet.
- Consider exposed shelving to store items.
- Lighting can be incorporated underneath shaving cabinets to afford good task lighting.

Basins, Toilets, Tapware & Baths

Along with kitchen renovations, bathroom renovations are now the most popular way to add value to a home and in recent years the bathroom has come to be recognised as a key living area within the home. The range and quality of bathroom products has also grown to reflect this trend. It does pay to consult the relevant trade professionals prior to purchasing fixtures or fittings to ensure you get the right items for your specifications.

Basins

- Basins can be made out of glass, vitreous china, and stainless steel or pressed steel. All are durable materials and the one you choose will be dependent on the look you want.
- Check that the basin you have chosen accommodates your choice of tap or mixer.
- Check the plug and waste is supplied with your basin, otherwise you can buy matching units to compliment your tapware.
- There are several different types of basins ; -
 - Semi Recessed - partly enclosed within a bench top with the front section protruding beyond the bench area.
 - Wall Mounted - mounted to the wall with brackets, usually without a surrounding vanity.
 - Pedestal - A wall mounted basin that sits at the top of a column style floor stand. Ideal for smaller bathrooms and some period style bathrooms.

Toilets

- Most quality toilets are made from vitreous china and while usually more expensive than plastic, they are much quieter when refilling.
- All toilets are required to have a 6/3 litre dual flush systems to meet Australian Standards.
- There are several different types of toilets :-
 - Wall-hung - Increasingly popular, the wall-hung toilet is mounted to a bracket in the wall. It takes up less space than a traditional unit and with an in-wall cistern or “Mains flush”, provides a clean, uncluttered appearance.
 - Close Coupled Suite -The cistern sits neatly above the bowl and provides a wash down flush.
 - Link Suite - The link suite features a separate pan and cistern linked by a pipe that can be exposed or concealed by a plastic “link piece”. Older style toilet system.
- You will most likely need to consult a plumber to assist in the most appropriate toilet selection for your space. Toilets come with various waste pipe configurations and water inlet provisions. A plumber can advise on the most cost-effective configuration for you.

Tapware

- Consider the look you are trying to achieve and go with tapware that compliments this. Flick mixers are modern and practical whilst separate taps and nozzle are more traditional.
- Diverse shower roses and tapware are available. Consider how you and other members of your household like to wash. Will it be useful to have a fitting on an adjustable rail or one that comes from the ceiling?
- Ask about the water usage of the tapware you are selecting. Is it economical?
- Ask about ease of getting parts for the tapware you are buying. Is it an Australian product or overseas ? If the latter, some items have problems coping with Australian water pressure and may also be difficult to find replacement washers and so forth.
- Ensure tapware you are selecting for a bathtub has a nozzle long enough to pour into the bath over the hob.
- Consider where you want the tapware positioned before work starts so the plumber can make rough in at the right heights.

Bath Tubs

- Modern baths are usually manufactured from one of three materials - acrylic, pressed steel or cast iron. Acrylic baths are durable and light, making them easy to work with. Pressed steel baths are formed out of a steel sheet that is then enamelled, giving a high quality finish that's hard wearing. Cast iron baths are made from a die using molten iron before being enamelled. These are often preferred when a traditional look is desired, but tend to be expensive and heavy to work with.
- Consider whether you would like a freestanding bath or one set in a hob. Hobs can be made with steps into the bath or with a wide surround to allow items to be placed around the edges.
- Corner baths can help save space where this is an issue.
- Spa baths are mostly made of acrylic using a vacuum formed mould. They usually come with a base frame to provide support for the bath once installed.
- There are two types of spa systems predominantly used for bathroom spas. The first is the hydro spa system that draws water into a pump, and then pushes it out in a jet to provide a powerful, invigorating massage. The second type is an air system that blows air into the water creating a soft, gentle massage. Some spa baths have a dual system that combines the hydro and the air system for the ultimate in bathing pleasure.

Mirrors & Lighting

- Mirrors are a great way to add depth, width and length to a small room. One mirror is generally enough. The mirror will also help to distribute light throughout the room.
- Mirrors on shaving cabinets or tall storage cabinets are a great idea, combining two features in one.
- Make use of natural light. A skylight will solve problems if the room is oriented away from the sun.
- Consider putting more windows along the top of the room. This gives more natural light and does not interfere with privacy.
- Place shelves on the walls near the ceiling and fit lights underneath them.
- Install lights to the underside of shaving cabinets.

Showerscreens & Accessories

- Shower screens come in a variety of styles but if you cannot find the one you want, you can have them made to measure. Frameless and semi-frameless shower screens have gained popularity in recent years primarily because they offer a cleaner look and tend to accentuate a feeling of spaciousness.
- Clear shower screens as opposed to opaque gives the illusion of more space and light. A fully frameless shower screen doesn't create any visual barriers at all and can work brilliantly in a small bathroom.
- It is recommended to recess the shower down slightly by about
- Accessories can have as much impact on the final look of your bathroom as the fixtures you choose, so consider how you'll integrate them at product selection stage. These are things like toilet roll holders, towel rails, hand towel rails, soap dispensers, toilet brush and soap dishes.

Ventilation and Heating

- Ventilation is a good idea to prevent mould and mildew build up. Are there enough windows to eliminate the need for further ventilation? Most bathrooms will need an exhaust in some capacity.
- Exhaust fans should not be placed directly over shower recesses. The outlet should be installed at the opposite end of the bathroom to the door. This will ensure the fan pulls fresh dry air through the doorway into the bathroom as the moist warm air is removed. The power of the exhaust fan you'll require will depend on the size of your bathroom.
- Consider laying underfloor heating with a digital timer. This will enable you to set heating at the times you use the bathroom. A worthwhile investment, but one which must be installed prior to tiling.
- If using ducted heating, locating the ducts near towel rails will help to dry your towels quickly
- A heated towel rail is a simple addition to any bathroom and worth considering.
- Consider mounting a heater on the wall at the planning stage so the power outlet can be installed where necessary to prevent messy wires and improve safety.
- Heat lights combined with an exhaust system are a handy inclusion in small bathrooms. If you are going for a larger unit, you may require a new circuit to be run to your bathroom.

Essential Questions to Ask before Signing up for a Bathroom Renovation

Before you select the company you would like to handle your project ask them the following questions:-

1. Ask to see examples of the company's work and referrals from past clients
2. Do they offer a warranty?
3. Will they give after sales service?
4. How long have they been in business?
5. Ask to see insurances (product and public liability and workers compensation).
6. Do they take out HIA insurance (this is a legal requirement)?
7. Ask to see their bathroom renovation licence.
8. Do they use only licensed trade's people? Ask to see their qualifications.
9. What procedures do they have in place if I'm not happy?
10. Will they custom-make cabinetry for my storage requirements? Can it be made out of marine ply if so requested?
11. Do they have a dedicated site supervisor for my renovation?
12. How long will the works take and do they provide me with a schedule of works?
13. Can you make any changes to the design? If so when?

14. Is all trade work included in the quote :-
- Site check by supervisor
 - Cabinetry, delivery and installation, stone tops
 - Removal of old bathroom
 - Plumbing
 - Electrical
 - Waterproofing
 - Tiling
 - Plasterwork
 - Rendering
 - Showerscreens and mirrors
 - Any building works (creating niches, relocating doorways, windows)
15. Ask why you should choose them.

The bathroom may be small but it's a complex room to renovate. It pays to let an expert handle the project for you to eliminate stress and costly mistakes. Choose a company you feel comfortable with and don't compromise on workmanship or quality, you want a bathroom you can be proud of - after all it is a significant investment in your home!