



Giving Your Bathroom a Facelift

Nothing dates a house more quickly than a bathroom that time has forgotten. Yet drab or outdated bathrooms can be dramatically revitalized. Bath products abound that can give you as lavish a bathroom as you could possibly want. Many homeowners want their bathrooms to be totally utilitarian, but others want rooms in which to pamper themselves. How about you?

Your answer, and your budget, will determine the best way to remodel. Do you want to work within the existing space of your current bathroom? Do you want to expand by taking room from somewhere else? Would you rather build an addition to accommodate your new bath? These are just a few options which vary greatly in cost.

Renovating your current space is usually the least complicated and least expensive option. While the layout of your existing bathroom can be altered to some extent, moving major plumbing fixtures is the most costly aspect of a remodel. Local building codes require minimum clearances between, beside, and in front of fixtures to allow for use, cleaning, and repair.

If you have an extra bedroom, you could move the bathroom to this space or expand a current bath into a portion of it. This will mean moving the plumbing but it will also add a modern, spacious bathroom to your home that will increase the resale value. An addition or even a small bump out could be the solution. This requires the largest investment but will give you just what you want.

If you've decided to remodel, start with an analysis of your existing bathroom:

- What is the condition of the sink, toilet, and tub/shower? If it's an older, wall hanging toilet, you might update the look, perhaps with a low-water consumption style. If your tub is basically sound, consider reglazing it. However, many homeowners are moving up to whirlpool style tubs.
- Does the sink have a vanity for storage? If it does, but you just don't like it, consider replacing it with a one of the many beautiful varieties that are available today.
- Does the sink have independent faucets? If so, you know how inconvenient this can be. Why not switch to a single operating lever, which is easier to use and gives a better mix of temperatures?
- Does your tub include a shower? One can easily be added with a combination tub-shower valve.
- Think about reinforcing the walls, adding grab bars, and widening doors for visitors with physical disabilities or for your later years.
- Is your medicine cabinet small and outdated? Consider the various styles of newer cabinets, perhaps with recessed or decorative lighting.
- How is the tile? If it is chipped and cracked and matching tile is not available, replacement or reglazing may be your best option.

- If a wooden window is suffering the effects of humidity, it may be best to replace it and older metal windows with new vinyl windows. Deco glass block has made a comeback and is a good option for adding light and design flair to a bathroom.
- Many older bathrooms don't have adequate ventilation. You may want to add a fan to avoid moisture build-up which can deteriorate materials and promote the growth of mold and mildew.
- Are electrical outlets a problem? Face it, the number of electrical appliances we use in our daily rituals has multiplied since the time many houses were built. That means that you probably want more outlets. New and replacement ones should be protected ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets that are made to shut off automatically when they sense water.

Today's bathroom can be all you want it to be. Enjoy the opportunity to explore the variety of materials, styles, and colors available to you. In the end, you'll have a well-designed bathroom that functions as beautifully as it looks.