

Good Homes Interior-design course

PART 15: DESIGNING YOUR PERFECT BATHROOM



'Whether you're updating your existing space, building a new home, adding an extension to include a larger bathroom or upgrading your fixtures and fittings, careful planning will help you achieve the bathroom of your dreams. Even in a small room, you can work wonders with the range of stylish, space-saving designs available. When choosing a bathroom scheme, the first thing to do is decide on the layout. The current trend is to include spa baths and walk-in wet rooms. However, before you knock down walls or move waste pipes, contact your local planning authority to find out about safety regulations, which will influence the design of the room.'

Deborah Drew

Deborah Drew (above), presenter of BBC TV's *DIY SOS*



Start by drawing up a scale plan of the room on squared paper, marking on where pipes, drains and electrical sockets are. Keeping pipework in its existing position will avoid costly plumbing work, but bear in mind that this will not necessarily be the best use of the space.

Be realistic about the possibilities – there's no point including a separate shower in your design if there's not enough space to open the cubicle door. If in doubt, measure the room and check manufacturers' guidelines on how much space to leave between fittings.

Dark wood is a big trend in bathroom design at the moment. A simple update on a classic roll-top bath works well in most styles of house.

Solo Master suite, £3,578, Heritage Bathrooms



▲ A bath that's wider at one end gives extra space for showering.

Oracle bath, £291.09, front panel, £73, end panel, £37.81, Sottini

ESSENTIAL GUIDELINES

★ To prevent condensation build-up, make sure your bathroom has good ventilation. If there are no windows, have an extractor fan installed. Usually operated by the light switch, a fan often continues to run once the light has been turned off.

★ If your boiler has to go in the bathroom, make sure it's installed by a qualified, Corgi-registered engineer, ventilated on an outside wall, and serviced regularly.

★ By law, a bathroom containing a WC, or a WC in a room on its own, must not lead directly from a kitchen, living or dining room, but can lead from a room used as a bedroom or dressing room. Check with your local planning authority for details.

★ The waste system is the least flexible aspect of a bathroom – the waste pipes must run downhill from the appliance to the soil or outlet. So, although the WC can be moved, this will usually mean having to pull up the floor and paying for the pipes to be relocated.

★ In some cases, moving the doorway or windows can help you maximise space in your room. Seek professional guidance if this will mean knocking through load-bearing walls.

Define your requirements

★ Research fittings and materials by noting the layout of other people's bathrooms, reading magazines and visiting showrooms.

★ Make a list of all the main fittings you want to include – bath, shower, WC, hand basin and so on – plus any extras, like an extractor fan, electric-shaver points, shelves, or additional heating.

★ Roughly mark all these elements on your scale plan. If your first attempt doesn't look right, try other combinations. Remember that water and waste pipes

and electrical points can be repositioned, but you'll need to budget extra for this.

★ Work out if walls need to be moved to fit in a separate shower cubicle or jacuzzi tub, and check the drainage and ventilation requirements of these additions.

Choose a style

Take the style and age of your home into account when choosing your fittings. A freestanding bath, large vanity unit and chain-pull cistern might be in keeping with a large Victorian house, for example, but a small bathroom in a new-build

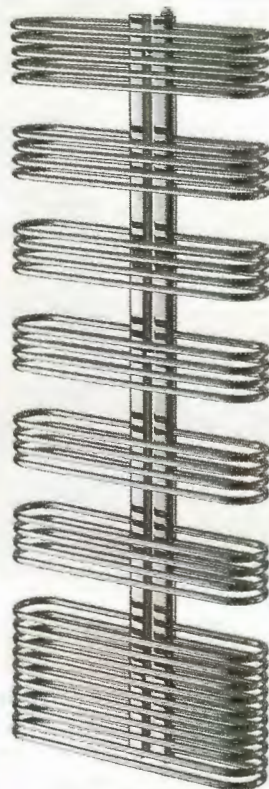


▼ **Fitting two basins is a popular trend.**

Venetian Marble **bowls**, £595 each, Iridescent Mosaic **tiles**, £330.45 per sq m, Metro **taps**, £495 each, Fired Earth

▲ **A wooden vanity unit and mirror contrast with a white suite.**

Vanity unit, £1,711, built-in **washbasin**, £309, **mirror**, £402, Villeroy & Boch Hommage range



▲ **This slim chrome radiator is perfect for a modern scheme.**

Axis, £484, Vogue UK

▶ **A pedestal basin neatly hides pipework.**

Sandringham **suite**, £504.26, Ideal Standard

property will look better with a modern, compact bath and WC. For classic suites, try companies like Fired Earth or Victoriaplumb.com. If you're looking for a stylish contemporary design, Bathstore.com and Habitat are among the shops to consider.

Think about the basin

Most commonly made of porcelain, basins are now also available in glass, plastic, stainless steel, iron or resin in a huge range of shapes and sizes.

Wall-mounted design looks great in a modern scheme and takes up less space than pedestal styles, as the pipes can be recessed into the wall.

Wall-mounted with storage Available in a wide range of styles, this option can include towel rails, counter space or drawers for toiletries.

Integrated A basin that sits in a storage unit makes the most of space while hiding pipework.

Pedestal An easy-to-fit choice, with pipework concealed by the pedestal. Can be bulky, though, so not ideal for a smaller bathroom.

Vessel This bowl-style basin can be attached to an existing cabinet or a cantilevered shelf. Choose a traditional ceramic bowl for a Spanish or Moroccan-inspired look, or glass or stainless steel to complement a more modern, minimalist scheme.

Double sink If you have room to spare and don't like queuing for the basin in the morning, opt for a double sink that means two people can use the bathroom at once. These styles can either be wall mounted or integrated into vanities.

Which type of bath?

Choose from a huge range of shapes and sizes to suit your space. Different materials each have advantages and disadvantages.

Cast iron/copper This is what roll-top baths were traditionally made from, so designs made of these materials suit a Victorian or Edwardian property.

Steel enamel A traditional choice, this type of bath is hard-wearing and cleans well, although it can chip if a heavy item is dropped in it.

Acrylic Cost-effective and lightweight, plastic baths come in many shapes and sizes. On the downside, they are liable to scratch, so abrasive cleaning products and scouring pads must be avoided.

SPA BATH

For a luxurious scheme, consider including one of the following:

★ **Whirlpool bath** has a series of small jets that pump re-circulated water into the tub for a massaging effect.

★ **Hot tub** is for soaking rather than bathing – ideal for relaxing tired muscles after exercise. Make sure your bathroom has adequate ventilation before buying one.





'To maximise space in a small bathroom, choose a compact suite that includes a back-to-wall WC and a wall-mounted sink unit with built-in storage. Consider a combined bath and shower, but don't be tempted to get rid of the bath altogether – this could devalue your property. Choose plain, neutral-coloured tiles and materials like chrome, glass and mirror, which reflect the light, giving the illusion of space.'

Fit a shower

Once installed as part of the bathtub, a shower is now often a freestanding unit. Available in all shapes and sizes, many have added features like hydro massage or steam options.

The first decision to make is whether to go for a power shower that connects to your boiler, or an electric system. 'Electric showers are the most popular and convenient choice,' says Lorna Fellowes, managing director of Triton Showers. 'They are connected to the cold-water mains supply and the water is heated as you use it, which means there's no waste from heating a full tank of water.'

Whereas an electric shower can have poor flow rate, a thermostatic mixer shower has a hot and cold inlet and a mixed water outlet, and automatically compensates for variations in water pressure



◀ **Wooden shelves provide valuable storage and contrast with pale green walls and mosaic tiles.** Bodini bathroom, from £1,752, Sottini

▼ **If space is tight, choose a wall-mounted sink and back-to-wall WC.** Elite Form shower, £660, shower tray, £435, basin, £170; Modena WC, £259; bespoke screen, £1,535, mirror, £115, Colourwash Bathrooms





‘Make sure you take your room’s measurements accurately, and consult a plumber to find out which aspects of your plan will be possible and whether there’s anything which is unrealistic.

You can design the bathroom you’ve always wanted, but keep in mind how much the installation will cost – not only in terms of money, but also regarding time spent and inconvenience caused.’



Add colour with this contemporary take on the traditional roll-top. Blue bath, £1,500, Ideal Standard

▲ **Large shower heads give a rain-like flow.** Ithaca **shower enclosure**, from £1,420, Glacier 03 **shower**, £425, Glacier 03 **shower rose**, £330, all other items, Fired Earth

▼ **For a neat look, opt for a vessel sink and a back-to-wall WC with no visible cistern.** Create Edge **bathroom**, £2,113, Ideal Standard

and temperature. If you’re looking for a really powerful water flow, choose a mixer shower with a separate or integrated pump.

Showers can be hand-held, wall-mounted or ceiling-mounted, and come in a huge variety of styles and shapes, with multiple adjustable shower heads, sprays and steam units. Hand-held styles are good for washing children, while freestanding shower cubicles with built-in water sprays and jets are another popular choice.

A shower cubicle can be made of almost any material as long as it’s waterproof and the tray is slip resistant. A combined bath/shower mixer and a shower curtain fitted above the bath are still a good choice for smaller spaces or as a quick revamp.

Consider toilet & bidet

When choosing a toilet or bidet, consider the space you have available, the size and shape of the toilet and the style that will be in keeping with the rest of the room. In addition, you can select a wide range of additional features like water-saving options, heated seats and concealed cisterns.

Toilets are most commonly made of porcelain, plastic or stainless steel. Traditional close-coupled styles have a visible cistern, whereas the cistern is hidden with back-to-wall designs.

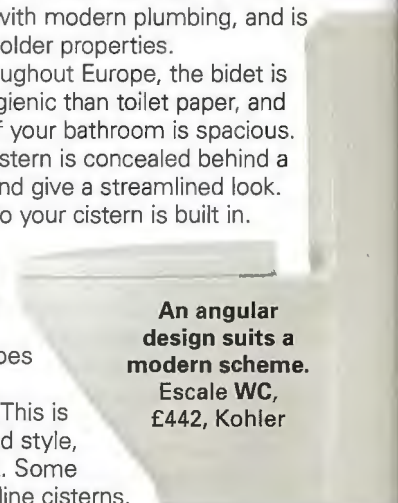
High-level cistern with pull chain The antique-style pull-chain toilet with wall-mounted cistern has now been updated with modern plumbing, and is a popular choice for older properties.

Bidet Common throughout Europe, the bidet is considered more hygienic than toilet paper, and is an optional extra if your bathroom is spacious.

Back-to-wall The cistern is concealed behind a wall to save space and give a streamlined look. Ensure that access to your cistern is built in.

Wall-mounted As with back-to-wall styles, the cistern is concealed behind a wall, but the toilet does not sit on the floor.

Toilet with cistern This is the most widely used style, and the easiest to fit. Some designs include slimline cisterns.



An angular design suits a modern scheme. Escalé WC, £442, Kohler





▲ **These decorative taps make a stylish focal point.**

Revival Scroll Handle basin mixer taps, £219, Kohler

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For stockist details, see page 17

ESSENTIAL CONTACTS

★ **Aston Matthews**
020 7226 7220; www.astonmatthews.co.uk
A wide selection of stunning designer styles.

★ **Ideal Standard**
01482 346461; www.ideal-standard.co.uk
A large range, including styles for compact bathrooms.

★ **Colourwash Bathrooms**
020 7586 1441;
www.colourwash.co.uk
Great for up-to-date designs and clever storage solutions.

◀ **Choose natural stone for a warm look, or glass for a modern scheme.**
Denzini tiles, £40.19 per sq m, Stonell Direct.
Atlantic tiles, £123 per sq m, Reed Harris

Tiles or paint?

The most effective way of waterproofing a bathroom is by using tiles. Choose from limestone, mosaic, ceramic, slate, marble and glass in many styles and colours. To give the illusion of extra space in a small room, choose large tiles rather than mosaic for a simple look.

Ceramic tiles come in a huge choice of colours, glazes, sizes and finishes, including matt, non-slip and gloss. Border tiles with patterns can look effective within a design to break up an expanse of plain tiles.

Paint is another option – anti-condensation, water-resistant formulas are best for bathrooms, and come in a wide range of colours. Alternatively, vinyl wallpaper is a good-value option that disguises uneven walls.

Flooring options

Stone types include limestone, slate and marble, in a wide range of finishes and textures. This flooring is very heavy and should be fitted by a qualified tiler. It will also need to be treated regularly to avoid water staining. Ceramic tiles are a more practical choice.

Vinyl flooring is hard-wearing, soft underfoot and easy to install. Available in tile form or as a roll, this good-value option comes in a wide range of colours, textures and patterns, including styles that simulate marble, wood and slate.

Get the right lighting

To minimise the risk of electric shocks or short circuits, it's important to use fittings specifically designed for the bathroom, and the switch must

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Ford Fiesta Zetec 1.4 Duratec (80PS) Euro Stage IV (16" tyre) shown are: urban 34.0 (8.3); extra urban 56.5 (5.0); combined 45.6 (6.2). The official CO₂ emission is 147g/km. Options at extra cost: 7-spoke alloys and metallic paint shown, Bluetooth® hands-free

either be a pull-cord design, or be located outside the room. Recessed lighting is a popular choice. Some designs are completely waterproof, making them perfect for use in the bathroom.

Storage ideas

Consider storage at the initial planning stage, in order to maintain a clean and clutter-free space. Storing items in a bathroom has never been easier. Multi-purpose mirror/shelving systems can hide toiletries and medicines, and over-door containers and under-counter basins with fitted shelves are among the other space-saving options available.



'If you're working to a small budget, buy good-quality tiles and taps and team them with a simple white suite for a stylish look.'



Recessed lighting can give a soft, layered effect.

Viao Duo bath, £800, Pietra di Brera basin, £715, Modena WC, £259, all other items, Colourwash Bathrooms

**NEXT ISSUE
CHOOSING THE
RIGHT FLOORING**



New voice-controlled 2006 Fiesta.

