

# Home Improvement

## Bathroom Remodeling — People Friendly, Ageless

Sue Clark, Clark Construction Company

**Most of us hope** to remain in our homes as we age. The bathroom is a very important room in the house and making it more accessible can have a huge impact on the quality of everyday life. As savvy homeowners remodel, they should do so with an eye to the future. Changes to accommodate later needs can be people friendly for today, as well. The needs of seniors vary greatly. Additional considerations would be needed for those with more concerns. Many of the below mentioned items are a normal part of a complete bath remodel anyway. Making smart selections is the key. The following is a list of possibilities for your renovation.

- Turn a five-foot standard tub into a low or no threshold shower (one of the most requested modifications).
- Permanent seating or a wall mounted folding chair, or use a portable chair when needed.
- Grab bars in the shower and possibly also at the toilet.

- Handheld shower spray that adjusts to heights for standing or sitting.
- Easy to reach shower shelves for shower toiletries.
- Anti-scald faucets (required in Allegheny County).
- Insulated lighting within the shower and more lighting around the entire bathroom.
- Non slip flooring.
- Comfort height toilets (several inches higher and easier on the knees).
- Mount the sink and countertop 34 inches off the floor.
- Lever handles (not round knobs) on the faucets and door.
- Rounded edges on the countertop.
- Contrast floor, counter, and cabinet colors for better visibility.
- Ventilate well by using an exhaust fan.
- Magnified mirror.

- Toilet paper holder with an open end—for easy paper replacement.
- Enlarge the bathroom door/opening to 32 inches.
- Phone jack.
- Heat mat under the tile floor for warmth and to aid in circulation.

Bathroom (and kitchen) updating is most essential for greater resale value of your home. If you sell your home under current market conditions, you will recuperate between 56-62% of the cost of your renovations. That number had been much higher in previous years, but has dropped recently under current market changes. It is normally recommended to have at least one bathtub for your home's resale value. But if you only have one bathroom, it may be more important for you to change it to a shower. The next homeowner may prefer a shower and he always has the option to change it back again. Plan early for your future, so you can be the decision maker. ■

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