



Bathroom makeovers

Today more and more homeowners are directing their energy and creativity towards redecorating the bathroom. Be it the family bath, or the master ensuite, the primary focus is on increased luxury comfort and convenience. Many homeowners are looking for new ideas to make their existing bathrooms larger.

Redecorating a small bathroom is a common design problem. If you can't expand the room, either by building an addition or by incorporating space from a nearby bedroom or closet, here are some ideas to help you get the most out of the space you have.

There are many ways to give a bathroom a facelift. You can make it visually larger by decorating with light colours. Large prints and bold stripes tend to overpower a small room. Stick to small prints whether you are painting or wallpapering. Limit your accessories. Remember, less can be more!

Try to create a sense of continuity. Bathrooms are chopped up enough by fixtures, so paint and wallpaper walls and ceiling the same colour.

When choosing a wallpaper make sure it is a good vinyl, that isn't prepasted. Wallpaper paste is water based and if the shower isn't ventilated properly, the vapour may cause the wallpaper to lift from the wall. When you paste by hand, use an oil-based glue.

Whether you are bold, colorful, soft or subtle, there are fixtures available that will reflect your persona and express your style. Everything from hand painted porcelain fixtures complete with matching gold plated faucets, to a variety of natural fixtures including granite, marble, onyx and teakwood are available. Leading manufacturers now work in harmony to create colour coordinated bath products.

If your colour fixtures are outdated, and new ones are out of the question, consider having them refinished. White is always a classic and an excellent choice.

Shower curtains can also make a room visually larger. Choose a clear shower curtain with a solid colour fabric curtain. And mirrors are another good trick to visually expand your space. A long mirror with plenty of lights increases the visual space and prevents having to jostle for mirror space when two people are using the bathroom.

If you are planning to change your fixtures, you may want to consider replacing your vanity and sink with a pedestal sink. This will give you more floor space, but you will lose some storage

space. Storage space problems can be solved in a variety of ways. Wall-mounted cabinets are a great way to hide bathroom clutter, without taking up valuable floor space. Units can be installed above the toilet, above the mirror or in the deck space below a raised bathtub. If you purchase a low profile toilet, there will be even more room for wall-mounted storage above. Choose cabinets that are no more than six inches deep so they don't get in the way.

Extending your counter-top over the back of the toilet is known as a "banjo top" counter. Be sure there is enough clearance space to raise the tank top should it require service. Open shelving between the toilet and vanity creates handy storage space, looks less bulky than closed storage space, and eliminates the need for clearance for a cupboard door.

A plastic coated wire mounted on a pegboard above a low profile toilet is another way to create storage space and works well as a decorative element.

If you don't have room for a shower stall, try installing a rounded shower base in the corner of a small bathroom, leaving no corners to jut out into valuable floor space. A folding door eliminates the need for clearance space between the pedestal basin and door. If your bathroom is too narrow for a standard vanity, ask your designer or contractor to build a bank of cabinets half as deep. Install a bump out sink because a regular drop in bowl won't fit in this type of cabinet. Since lower cabinets will be shallow, you won't have to reach as far for supplies.

Both light and ventilation are important in a bathroom. Light expands the space and prevents shadows. Ventilation keeps air circulating. A combination fan forced heater/ventilator/ceiling light allows all three work separately or together. This eliminates the need to buy three different fixtures.

Whatever your decorating style, there are a host of new patterns, colours and designs available that will reflect your particular tastes and serve to make your bathroom more functional.