

## Remodeling Outdated Bathrooms

Whether you are Staging to Sell or Staging to Live we hope you find these suggestions helpful. When looking at remodeling a bathroom, three considerations come in to play:

1. Price - what is your budget to accomplish the remodel?
2. Motivation - Are you doing this for personal or re-sale reasons?
3. Plan - Do you have a well thought-out plan for this remodel?

**Price:** As we all know, remodeling a part of a house can vary greatly in price. Setting a budget ahead of time will help you to better determine which materials to use, and who to hire for the job. Too many times homeowners head into a remodel without a set budget only to find themselves spending far too much for an upgraded area of their house. There are many simulated materials in the market that give the look of an expensive tile or flooring without the cost.

**Motivation:** Why are you remodeling? Are you doing this to improve resale value or do you plan on staying in the home to enjoy the changes? This makes a big difference in how much or little will go into the remodel. There is a limit to how much can be tacked onto the list price of a house after a remodel and we don't want to over-improve a house that is to be sold, especially in a declining market.

**Plan:** What is your plan? Have you had anyone pre-inspect the bathroom to make sure there are no hidden issues like mold or dry rot? If those are lurking behind walls or in floors, it can add a substantial cost to the remodel, which could impact how much is done, and the materials to be used.

**BASIC UPGRADES:** Change the fixtures - lighting, faucets and handles. It's like giving your bathroom new jewelry to wear. With lighting, remove all fluorescent fixtures - those scream "I am dated" and replace with a nice bronzed, chrome or brass fixture. You may have to patch and paint or even modify the ceiling of a bathroom to do this, but the results are worth it.

Replace the outdated toilet - this again is an easy fix as you are just modernizing the look of the bathroom without moving things around.

**Change the Colors:** Paint the walls a nice warm neutral. What if there is wall paper? You can remove it - or better yet, just paint right over it! There are now paints that go right over wall paper (as long as it is not peeling off) and have a texture in the paint that makes it look just like drywall.

What if your counters and shower tiles are out of date in color? If you don't have the budget to replace the counters and redo the shower, re-enamel them instead! There are companies such as Miracle Method, a franchise store, that come and re-enamel the surfaces of tile counters and showers. They warranty their work and can transform a dated color into a nice neutral up-to-date selection. At a fraction of the cost of removing and replacing, this is a great alternative for a limited budget fix.

**Change the Flooring:** If you have a linoleum floor, you can replace the flooring with new lino that looks like tile, or consider putting tile down. In most cases, if the linoleum is in good shape and there are no issues with mold or dry rot, a layer of tile can be put right over the top, using the lino as the "base" for the tile to adhere.

**GOING TO TOWN:** For homeowners that have the time, resources and budget to fully remodel a bathroom, starting with a plan is the key. If you plan on completely restructuring the size and functions in the bathroom, working with a specialist that can help properly plan the changes and get necessary permits in place is needed.

Pick a theme - do you want a spa look in your bathroom? Do you want warmth with colors and fixtures like a Tuscan Villa or do you want it to feel light and airy? The answers to these questions will direct your design and purchases.

**Bathtub:** If you have an existing tub and plan on upgrading, know that larger tubs with Jacuzzi features are great - and they also are a bit larger than the average tub. Too many new construction houses have tiny spa tubs really good for one person and this miss the mark. Decide if you plan on using the Jacuzzi feature and want it built for 2 - definitely get the right size.

**Showers:** Have you always wanted a dual-head shower? Is there room for this feature? Do you want a shower door that

is solid glass or do you want some privacy? If you don't want the whole world to see you while you shower, consider using glass blocks that still allow the light to come in but diffuse the visual. There are actually acrylic blocks you can purchase in a pre-set dimension that are more inexpensive and durable than glass.

**Flooring:** General rule is to stay away from carpeted bathroom floors - and so if you have that, get rid of it. Hard surfaces in the bathrooms are what's in - and what is expected from buyers. There are natural stones you can use such as marble, travertine, and granite, but there are also simulated ceramic tiles that mimic the look of these more expensive and harder to maintain materials.

**Get Creative:** Add a little flair to your tile work - with decorative accent tiles, or even a pattern on the floor. You can put the tiles at an angle for a dressier look or consider having a small mosaic or pattern in the floor. Don't go overboard - remember: Less is more even with bathroom tiles and accent flair.

**Countertops:** If money is in the budget, then tile the tops of the counters. Get rid of the old one-piece marble as it looks dated and go with a tile that compliments the flooring. You can vary shades of the tiles but stay away from doing too much contrast. If your floor is dark, you can go lighter on the counters and vice-versa.

**Sinks:** There are wonderful options for homeowners available from large home improvement stores to specialty catalogs. If possible, check the sinks out in person - and pretend as if you are using them. How many times have you been at a hotel and brushed your teeth in a sink that was too small, or the faucet hit you in the face as you washed your face? Think of the functionality of the sink as well as the aesthetic design.

**Lighting.** Lighting in the bathroom is important so make sure the overhead lighting is addressed, as well as the direct lighting above the sinks and vanity areas. Choose light fixtures that are in harmony with your color scheme and theme for the bathroom. Sconce lights, inverted sconces, and directional lighting can be used very effectively in a bathroom. Try to stay away from the bright bulbs that look like a Hollywood make-up station - they not only add too much heat, but can be costly.

**Ventilation:** Some older houses do not have proper ventilation in the bathrooms. Consider adding a fan in your shower to help remove the steam and hot air. There should be one in the toilet area as well.

**Accessorize:** Once you have the bathroom done, now it's time to add the accessories that are the icing on the cake. Splurge on some nice towels. Don't overcrowd your counter tops - after all you just paid to have them redone! Invest in some nice artwork that compliments that theme you have chosen. If you need help in this area, call an expert. We'd love to help you finish off the project!

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