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A New Look For an Old Bathroom

If the showerhead drips, the tub finish is chipped and the tile is an ugly color, then it is time to remodel or at least update the bathroom in your house. In the Bay Area, homeowners can expect to spend an average of \$12,000 on a bathroom remodel. Approximately 149% of that cost can be recouped if the home is sold within three years of completing the remodel. With that motivation to get started, here are some considerations for getting the most value out of your expenditures.

About 70% of adults prefer showering to bathing; so removing an underutilized bathtub to create a doublewide shower is a good investment in the resale value of the home. The shower can now accommodate two sets of fixtures or a bench at one end for sitting. Change out any windows in the shower to double paned glass with vinyl frames. If there aren't any windows in the stall, install a ceiling light in the shower stall. Consider adding grip rails and recessing the shower door track flush with the flooring to facilitate universal access.

Clear glass frameless shower doors have been popular for several years because they show off the tile design in the shower stall and make the space seem larger. However, unless you want to squeegee off the glass after each shower to prevent watermarks and mineral deposits, you may want to consider another type of glass. Rainglass, which is smooth on the interior side, gives the effect of water running down the outside of the glass. It will minimize the appearance of watermarks while adding an element of texture to the room.

Is the bathroom warm enough when you step out of the shower? Heated towel racks and overhead vent/light/heater combinations are good ways to warm up a bathroom which is built on a concrete slab, has lots of windows or is on an exterior wall.

If the room is narrow or short, mirroring an entire wall will make the room seem twice as large. The mirror can be cut to fit flush with the corners of the wall or framed with picture moulding for a more glamorous effect. Lights placed in front of a mirror will be twice as bright as those mounted on a wall.

Creative storage options will help eliminate the clutter in the bathroom. An extra medicine cabinet can be recessed in the wall between the studs. Cover the opening with either a mirrored door or a standard cabinet door with magnetic



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pressure release latches. Use wall niches to store towels, soaps and shampoos. Remember to measure a ready-made tile niche for your shower before ordering it to make sure that it is tall enough to hold your shampoo and conditioner bottles. Drawers in the vanity can have dividers installed so that medicine bottles are easy to read and all your cosmetics are not in a jumble.

Selecting the same floor tile (porcelain, ceramic or stone) for the bathroom and the shower stall floors will make the room appear larger. Use matte or tumbled finishes on flooring surfaces to minimize slipping with wet feet. Heater wire can be installed under the flooring at a modest cost to make the experience of drying off after a hot shower much more pleasurable.

To avoid chipped, oxidized scarring on gold tone fixtures, be sure to select faucets and knobs with lifetime warranties on the finish. These new finishes will hold up to abrasive cleaners and even steel wool! The mixed metal and matte nickel finishes for fixtures that are popular now are also very low maintenance. Buy good quality fixtures with ceramic washers that will prevent drips and leaks for many years. The price difference between good quality plumbing fixtures and cheap ones is insignificant in relation to the total cost of the remodeling project, but the value of good fixtures is immediately apparent to anyone using your remodeled bathroom.

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