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Expert tips for saving big on a DIY Bathroom Remodel

Decide to DIY (Do It Yourself) bathroom remodel - and you'll have a beautiful \$25,000 bathroom for a fraction of the cost of a professional remodel. All this by purchasing and upgrading the following items yourself. The following tips on bathroom color, vanities, vanity tops/material, ceramic tile, faucets, lighting and organizing the project.

Get a new look and stay on budget

If you plan your design, shop smart and invest some of your own time, you can easily have a \$25,000 bathroom remodel for a fraction of the price, if you want to save big money and DIY.

We suggest an updated bathroom with new floor and wall tile, new vanity and top, and new plumbing fixtures. Frame the mirror and add metal or even glass shelves above the toilet - all for less than \$2,500. You can do it yourself, and with all the materials purchased at home centers. In this article, we we provide all the suggestions on the what and how to do this. The following suggestions and improvements are design savvy and easy on your wallet.

We also recommend consulting with a professional designer before remodeling a bathroom to avoid common mistakes, and to gain valuable design elements, and ideas. Expect to pay \$100 to \$125 for a one-hour meeting. All the materials for a DIY bathroom remodel came from home centers and cost less than \$2,500. American.

Frame the mirror and side-light it

Mount lighting fixtures on each side (both right and left) of the mirror for the best lighting. Tile around the mirror to frame the mirror, the tile frame adds style to the mirror. Any tile will work - e.g. use a mosaic glass tile.

Use mastic adhesive to fix the tile to the wall. Tape off the mirror to keep it clean.

You can also buy a simple wood mirror frame at a framing store, or wood molding with a rabbet cut into the back and build your own frame. Do not forget to paint or stain the frame before installing it. Adds a lot of character to the bathroom.

Sconces placed on both the right and left sides of a mirror will give you much better illumination than overhead lights. Light cast from opposite sides eliminates shadows on your face. And two lights reflected in the mirror will brighten the entire room.

Brighter lights give a bathroom a welcoming appeal and add a lot of ambience to the space. Cost: \$30 and up for mosaic tile; \$20 for wood frames you make yourself; \$26 and up for two sconces.

Important Tip:

Light fixtures, plumbing fixtures and all the hardware you are going to use doesn't have to match, but, they should complement the other finishes and styles that you're using.

Check out granite vanity tops

You can find pre-made granite tops that are surprisingly affordable and elegant.

Granite tops used to be for high-end bathrooms. But now you can install one for less than \$200. You can purchase at a local home center, including an attached, under-mounted sink. Mount the faucet in the vanity top before setting the top in place.

You won't have to lie on your back inside the vanity and reach up under the faucet.

Important Tip:

Best to select the vanity you want first, then the vanity top. Then the sink. Next, choose your flooring and tile. Choose plumbing fixtures and finally the wall paint. It is way easier to match paint to the vanity and tile; than the other way around.

Add Crown Molding

Crown molding is an inexpensive addition that makes a big impact in bathrooms, and installing it adds a certain degree of elegance to any bathroom. And since bathrooms tend to be small, you can add a lot of elegance for \$50 to \$100. For painted crown molding, urethane is an excellent option, because unlike wood, it won't expand and contract with changes in humidity. Urethane molding is lightweight and very easy to install with adhesive caulk and finishing nails. Available at your local home center, 8-ft. sections generally are \$3 to \$15 less expensive than wood the same length.

If you want to use wood, you have to make sure the bathroom is well ventilated too. Also seal the back side of the molding with a quality wood conditioner if you're staining the wood, or a primer if you're painting it. Sealing the back side greatly reduces warping. Cost: \$13.50 and up per 8-ft. section of urethane molding.

Install a curved shower curtain rod

A curved shower curtain rod adds considerable space to your shower.

Besides giving the bathroom a up-to-date sleek look with its gentle radius, a curved curtain rod has a practical benefit, it gives you more elbow room in the shower. You can use your current shower curtain, or buy a new curtain and new rings in the same finish as the curtain rod to complete the new look. Cost: \$40 and up, depending on the finish.

Mix in mosaic tile

Patches of mosaic tile or other expensive tile add a certain style and elegance without the high price tag. Mosaic tile accents give shower surrounds a stunning custom look while letting you use mostly inexpensive tile. Plan your layout carefully on paper first to identify any design or fit issues. Do shop around for the tile you want, you can save a fortune. Tile on clearance: 60¢ per tile and mixed in mosaic glass tile (\$8-\$9 per sheet).

Add a corner shower shelf

Installing corner shower shelves makes small and handy storage nooks for soaps and shampoos. Home centers and tile stores sell all types of corner shelves that you adhere or stick to tile walls with all-purpose construction adhesive. Apply adhesive to the shelf back, then tape the shelf in place and then let the adhesive set-up for 24 hours. This only works for tile walls, not fiberglass surrounds, where you have to use shelving that sticks with suction cups or tension bars. Cost: \$15 and up per tile shelf.

Install new shower faucets for a new look

New plumbing fixtures give your shower a fast and stylish face-lift. Use a shower trim kit if you replace your single-handle shower faucet. These remodeling kits come with all the necessary parts: a new handle and wall plate to update the look of your faucet while leaving the old valve in place. Make sure to purchase the same brand as your existing faucet. Most models are available at home centers. If you don't see your brand, contact your faucet manufacturer to find out where to buy one. Cost: \$25 and up.

Measure your vanity dimensions, carefully - twice

When most older bathrooms are initially built, the vanities were installed before the flooring. That means your flooring ends at your vanity. If you're replacing the vanity, buy one that's the same length or larger and width as your existing vanity. Or, you will end up with gaps between the vanity and the flooring. Or replace the flooring at the same time as well. Then you can install a new vanity of your choice, in any size you want and butt the new flooring against it. New cabinets can make a serious and dramatic improvement. Cost: \$100 and up.

Spoil yourself with a high-quality faucet

Buy a high-quality faucet; it really will pay off in the long run. The sink faucet is one feature where quality is suggested and smart to splurge on. You need your faucet to last and also look good doing so. One way to evaluate a quality faucet is by its weight. Sounds funny, but, heavier ones are better, because they are solid metal. For optimal durability, buy a fixture that uses a ceramic disc valve, so check the packaging. The ordinary rubber washers wear out with the type of use they get in a bathroom. And be sure to buy the right faucet that fits the hole pattern that came with your sink/vanity. Buy a quality faucet with a lifetime warranty. Cost: \$90 and up for a quality fixture.

Important Tip:

Find the colors that you like, to spotlight the bathroom, then add those colors with new matching dispensers and new towels. They make a huge difference.

Lose the towel bar, replace with stylish towel hooks

Buy towel hooks that match the style or finish of the faucet and compliment the vanity. Installing hooks instead of towel bars helps you keep your bathroom better organized. Because they are simple to use, particularly for kids, so the used towels don't end up on the floor. A big plus: you can install several hooks and hang more towels in the same space a towel bar would take. The hooks are usually called “utility hooks” or “robe hooks” at home centers. Cost: \$1.20 and up per hook.

Install new vanity hardware/handles

New handles will update an older vanity style. If you decide to keep costs down by keeping your vanity, give it a substantial update by installing new handles. Visible hinges should be replaced as well. To change from knobs to handles, or vice versa, install “back plates” under the hardware to cover the existing holes. Home centers carry a limited selection, but you can special-order them or buy them online.

Cost: \$1 up for knobs; \$4 and up for handles.

Test the paint colors

A fresh coat of paint makes a world of difference by brightening up the room and adding color. Stay with white for the ceiling, it actually makes the room appear bigger. Satin and eggshell finishes are great choices for bathrooms. They are easy to clean and don't show imperfections on the wall. Paint stores and home centers sell paint samples, so you can test out colors before painting your entire bathroom. Testing color samples lets you see the true color on your walls so most of the guesswork is removed.

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