

# Disability Campaign.org

## How to Make Your Bathroom more Accessible

We use bathrooms everyday, but are our bathrooms at home accessible? If you or a loved one has a disability, you've probably already considered the ways you can make your bathroom more accessible. But though you may not be affected by disability now, the truth of life is that we will age and at some point need to do adaptations to make our bathrooms (and homes) more accessible. Below are some ways in which you can make your bathroom more accessible.

Image: Handicapshower.info

### Showers and bathtubs

- Apply bath safety treads to the floor of tubs and showers to avoid slipping on wet surfaces.
- Make sure bathroom floor mats have grips underneath them to prevent them from sliding.
- Replace your showerhead with a hand held shower kit to limit reaching or stretching.
- Consider using a roller shower seat or fixed shower seat (height should be of 17-19”).
- Use a small stool or plastic chair. This will allow the person with a disability to sit while showering, but it can be easily removed to accommodate users who don't need the seat.
- Curbless showers are ideal for people using wheelchairs, walkers, or for those who have a high risk for falls.
- Walk-in tubs can provide easier access for the elderly or those who cannot climb over the side of a tub.



- Install grab bars on the sides of the walls of the shower or bathtub to assist the user.
- Consider the placement of items used in the shower, such as shampoo, soap, a washcloth, etc.
- Install a glass door instead of a shower curtain to allow more lighting to go into the shower.
- Lower the hot water maximum heat temperature to prevent any burns.

Image: cjonline.com



### Sinks and bathroom counters

- Persons using wheelchairs and walkers will find pedestal sinks easier to maneuver around in a bathroom.
- If it is not possible to install a pedestal sink, consider removing cabinet doors to make access to stored items easier and so that wheelchair users can better approach the sink.
- The sink needs to be 24" maximum rim height with a 27" clearance for knees.
- Install a single-handle faucet that can easily be turned on, or consider installing a hands-free faucet with a sensor.
- Consider the placement of items regularly used, such as hand towels, toothbrushes and first aid supplies, and bring them closer to reach.
- Replace your soap dispenser with one that has motion sensor technology and provides sanitary, touch-free operation.
- Purchase and/or install a magnifying and lighted vanity mirror for those with low vision.
- Lower the hot water maximum heat temperature to prevent any burns.

## Bathroom Toilet

Image: Showeringworld.com

- ADA guideline recommendations are that a toilet be 17-19" high. The higher the toilet seat, the easier it may be for a person to lower, stand, or transfer from a wheelchair or walker to the toilet.
- If you cannot replace your current toilet, replace the toilet seat with a new, thicker toilet seat to add some height.
- Make sure that the toilet paper dispenser and personal hygiene wipes are within reach.
- Keep extra toilet paper, sanitary pads, and other personal hygiene supplies within reach.
- Install at least one grab bar in close proximity to the toilet.



## Lighting

- Good lighting can help prevent bathroom falls and other accidents.
- Ensure that light switches are easily reachable or install a “smart home” lighting option, such as voice-activated lights. Though motion-sensing lights may be helpful for those who have trouble accessing light switches, they are not recommended in home bathrooms as they may turn off accidentally due to motion-sensing lights not detecting enough movement.

The goal of making your bathroom more accessible is to improve the comfort of and reduce the risk for people with disabilities. However, accidents can happen, so make sure to keep emergency phone numbers in the bathroom where they can be easily accessed in the case of an emergency. Though most people have done away with their landlines, consider installing a phone in the bathroom. This way, you will always have a phone to call for help if needed.

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