

# How To Give Your Bathroom a Facelift

By Mike Dunn

Giving the bathroom a facelift may require just a few modifications here and there, or it could be a more extensive project, depending upon your needs and desires.

With a little effort, you can work with what you have and create a different look in your bathroom without the cost of a major overhaul. For example, if the tiles in your bathroom don't need to be replaced, you may want to consider painting them. Adding a border or hanging wallpaper are other modifications that don't require great investments in time or cash, but yield impressive results in a short amount of time. Something as simple as buying colorful or patterned towels and a new shower curtain, or adding a new rug can make a world of difference.

Painting the bathroom tiles is an option as long as the tiles are not located inside the shower or bathtub or do not come in direct contact with water. After washing the tiles thoroughly, apply a shellac-primer and then use two coats of an oil-based paint.

Adding a border can give your bathroom an entirely new look. There are a large variety of decorative wallpaper borders available at your local hardware or home-improvement store that can be placed just below the ceiling or midway up the walls and make a world of difference. Borders are typically pre-pasted and sold in rolls 15 feet long, so you will want to have the measurements of your bathroom with you when you go to make your purchase.

Instead of just adding a wallpaper border, you may want to go all the way and hang wallpaper over the walls. As with the borders, there are plenty of design patterns out there, so take the time to choose what will best complement your bathroom. And don't be afraid to ask advice. A vinyl-coated wallpaper that is fabric-backed is usually best for bathrooms. They are sold in pre-pasted rolls that are generally pretty easy to apply, or you can get the wallpaper that is not pre-pasted and apply the paste yourself with a roller. In either case, all the wallpapering tools you'll need are readily available at your local hardware or home-improvement store. The tools, including a razor knife, water tray, roller and brush, can usually be found in kits.

Another option is adding a stencil border instead of a wallpaper border. Stencil designs also come in wide varieties and are readily available for a reasonable price. The pre-cut stencil design is sold with stencil brush and acrylic paint and is easy to apply. Just follow the directions.

One caveat here. When doing wallpaper borders or stencil borders, remember that it is usually better to stick with small prints and subdued stripes or other designs. Large prints and bold stripes can tend to dominate a bathroom, especially if it is a smaller room. Since bathrooms are generally small and have a number of fixtures in them, it is better to stay with one color theme to provide a sense of continuity.

If hanging wallpaper or doing borders doesn't appeal to you, then you may want to put a coat of fresh paint on your walls and trim. Newly painted walls are always inviting. Remember to use a light color if you want to make your bathroom seem visually larger than it is. The important thing is to purchase a high quality latex paint and to carefully wash the surfaces of the walls and patch any holes or cracks before painting.

Another way to give your bathroom a facelift is to add accessories such as new faucets, towel holders, soap dishes and glass holders.

Faucets come in a range of colors these days. Everything from standard chrome to solid white to pure black to gold-plated is on the market. The same or complementary colors are also available for towel holders and other accessories. Changing faucets is another fairly easy do-it-yourself project. Again, just follow the installation directions and make sure the water is turned off ahead of time.

Changing the sink and/or toilet requires some more time and effort, but can still be accomplished without too much difficulty and can greatly enhance the appearance of your bathroom. You might be surprised at the low cost of a new sink or commode.

Sinks are available in a wide variety of styles and surfaces. They can be as fancy or as simple as you like and will vary in cost accordingly. Drop-in basins are popular and are generally made to fit into an existing countertop. For the adventurous, there are also pedestal sinks and vessel sinks. The pedestal sinks have a narrow base, look nice, and save on space, but they do not have a countertop or built-in storage space.

The practical goal is a sink that looks nice and also has a big enough area at the top for items such as soap, toothbrushes, shaving lotion and other personal sundries. If you decide to go with a pedestal sink and forsake the counter space, you could install a space-saver shelf unit to fit over the toilet with two or three shelves instead and gain extra space you need that way.

The bathtub could a different story. Replacing usually involves a tile setter, a plumber and most likely a carpenter to repair all the damages to the sub flooring and surrounding areas. A recent survey estimated the cost to be priced from \$1,700 to \$3,000.

Refinishing could be an answer to an unsightly bathtub. A bathtub in poor condition can be restored to look like new for a fraction of the replacement cost. A professional refinishing company can offer choices of color that seem unlimited and typically carry a longer warranty that you might imagine. New technology has made this a very popular option when remodeling your bathroom.

Giving your bathroom a facelift is not as daunting a task as it may seem. Start with a few simple improvements and go from there. The results may surprise you.

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