

How To Install a New Showerhead

By Kimberly Johnson

Once upon a time, a shower was simply a means of washing away the grime from a hard day's work. These days a shower still fills that need, plus a whole lot more. Showers aren't only for bathing. They're for relaxing, de-stressing, soothing muscles, and even partaking in aromatherapy! However you use your shower, there is a showerhead available.

The almost innumerable options range from a basic enlarged faucet to those models claiming to massage the entire body. Check online with different showerhead retailers, or visit a customer opinion Web site like Epinions (<http://www.epinions.com>) and read about customer experiences with a number of different showerheads. The price of showerheads runs from between about \$25 up to several hundred dollars.

Replacing a showerhead is a fairly basic job. In addition to increasing things like water efficiency and the number of water flow options, a new showerhead can greatly improve the look and feel of your bathroom's shower. The project will be satisfying both aesthetically, and for building your self-confidence as a budding home project enthusiast.

This project is handy for outdoor showers as well. Why not attach a showerhead fixture to an outdoor spigot? Think of how useful it would be for gardeners, lawn maintenance workers, and families with children. After a day at work, or some fun in the back yard sandbox, simply turn on that outdoor shower and rinse off—leaving the dirt and sand outside where it belongs.

A trip to your local hardware store or home improvement center is necessary to procure the needed items for this do-it-yourself project. Start by selecting a new showerhead. In addition, you'll need to purchase some thread sealant tape. The only tool required is an adjustable wrench. An old cloth or rag will be handy to wipe off excess sealant, as well as water. A small amount of liquid dish soap will come in handy toward the end.

A necessary precaution, since you'll need to stand inside the shower while replacing the showerhead, is to wipe up any drops of water on the bathtub or shower stall floor. This will help prevent slipping. A rubber bathmat is a good alternative.

The first step in this project will be to remove the existing showerhead. Hold fast to the showerhead stem with your cloth. In addition to protecting the finish of the showerhead stem, this will ensure a good grip for the next step.

Use your wrench to gently twist off the existing showerhead. At the end of the shower stem, you'll see you have exposed some threads. Unwrap that package of sealant tape and cut off a piece long enough to wrap around these threads either two or three times. Being careful not to scratch the showerhead fitting with the wrench, gently screw on the new showerhead. Screw it clockwise—gently meeting the threading underneath, until it is fastened tightly.

Now you're ready to test the expertise of your workmanship. Step outside of the tub, and turn on the shower. Look closely at the showerhead to determine if any water is leaking. If you suspect leaks, but don't actually see them, the following step will help ascertain whether or not any leaks exist.

Put a small amount of the liquid dish soap on your fingertips and thumb. Gently rub the soap all around the fitting on the showerhead. Once you've rinsed and dried your hands, inspect the showerhead for any places where tiny bubbles are being formed. This indicates a leak. If you believe to have found a leak, carefully remove the new showerhead and start over, following the steps above. Removing the sealant tape and applying a new wrapping is a good idea, as this is often the source of a leak. If all else fails (and it's quite unlikely that this will be the scenario) contact your local plumbing and heating supply company and ask them for suggestions. At the very least they'll offer the name and phone number of a good plumber!

This is one home improvement that even beginners can handle. Once achieving the successful replacement of your new showerhead, it could very well be that the next do-it-yourself project on your home improvement list is a refurbishing of your entire bathroom. But first, take a deep, satisfying breath. Stand back and admire your successful handiwork. Put away your tools and supplies, then turn that shower on and let the room grow hot and steamy. Now it's time to reap the benefits of that newly installed showerhead. Enjoy!

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