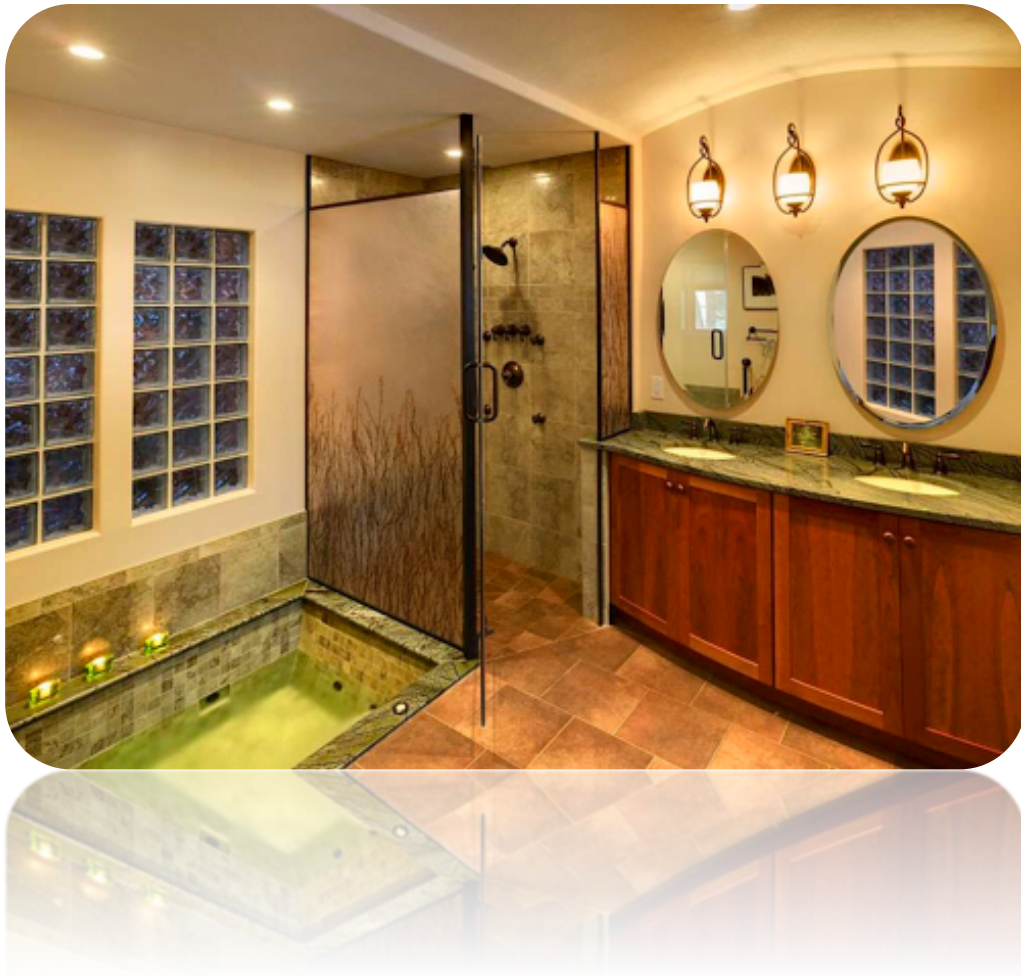


Homeowner's Guide

How to Start Your Bathroom Remodeling Project



McClurg
Remodeling & Construction Services
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Forward



Brian Ciota, Vice President & Co-Owner

When we speak to customers for the first time or meet with people at the [CNY Home and Garden Show](#) we are often asked, “What do I need to do to prepare for my remodeling project?” This is such a common question that we decided to draw on our 30-plus years of experience and publish free guides to help homeowners start their remodeling and renovation projects.

“How to Start Your Bathroom Remodeling Project” is the third in a series of guides we have developed to help answer your basic questions about home remodeling and renovation, and to share information to help make your project a great success.

Our other free guides – [“10 Things You Must Know BEFORE Hiring a Remodeling Contractor”](#) and [“How to Plan a Kitchen Remodeling Project”](#) are available for download on our Website.

Where do you begin your bathroom remodeling project? We suggest starting by answering the questions we have listed for you in section 1 of this guide and then completing the checklist that follows. This guide also identifies design trends that will add both function and value to your home as you update your bathroom. Since storage is always a concern, you will find tips in this guide to help solve your storage problems. Safety is always a concern too, and the guide discusses ways to ensure that your bathroom is both safe and accessible to users.

We have included a list of online resources you can browse for some of the best products on the market and current trends in bathroom design.

We hope you find the information in this guide helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Ciota'.

Brian Ciota
Vice President & Co-Owner
McClurg Remodeling & Construction Services

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1. Questions to Answer Before Starting Your Project

Begin planning your bathroom remodeling project by considering the following questions *before* discussing the project with a contractor:

1. What type of a bathroom are you planning to remodel – powder room, children’s bath, master suite, guest bath, basement bathroom?
2. Will you be remodeling an existing bathroom or adding an addition?
3. Who will be the primary users - you, your spouse, children, parents or guests?
4. How many people will use the bath at one time?
5. Do any of the users have [special needs](#)?
6. What type of activities will take place in the space? Bathing, grooming, make-up application, dressing, exercise, relaxation, laundry, other?
7. What type of [storage do you need](#) in the space?
8. Do you plan to add a closet for clothing to the space?
9. Do you plan to include a “privie” (an isolated area for the toilet and/or bidet) in the room?
10. What is your personal [home design “style”](#) – contemporary, traditional, county, minimalist, elegant, environmental friendly (green) or other?
11. How long do you intend to own this home?
12. Is [return on your investment](#) in the home a primary concern? According to [Remodeling Magazine](#) the average cost in 2010 of a midrange bathroom remodeling project in our region was \$17,683 and the return at resale was \$10,793 or 61 percent. A bathroom addition averaged \$43,591 and the return at resale was \$21,150 or 49 percent. The average cost of an upscale bathroom remodel was \$56,687 with a return at resale of \$30,215, 53 percent.
13. What do you [dislike](#) most about your present bathroom?
14. What do you [like](#) most about your present bathroom?

1. Questions to Answer Before Starting Your Project

After you've thought about these questions make some notes to discuss with your contractor or designer. Are there items or fixtures in the bathroom that can be used or salvaged?

Prioritize "needs" and "wants" as you plan your budget. Use this checklist and see ["Shopping for Bathroom Essentials"](#).

	Want	Need	Make	Price
New Vanity				
Vanity Surface				
Sink(s)				
New Toilet				
Bidet				
Tub				
Tub for Two				
Whirlpool Tub				
Separate Shower				
Showerhead				
Faucets				
Privie				
Linen Storage				
Clothes Closet				
Heat Lamp				
Wall Tile				
New Light Fixtures				
Laundry Area/Appliances				
Media Equipment				
Exercise Area/Equipment				
Other:				

Advance planning and identifying your priorities will make the process of discussing your project with a contractor or designer easier. It will also help you establish a budget.

Finally, [discuss a schedule with your contractor](#). Determine when you would like to start the project and when you would like the work completed.

2. Functional Bathroom Design Trends

We've [remodeled bathrooms](#) for many homeowners over the years and through our experience we've learned that trends change with the availability of new products and creative designs, which can alter the look and use of the space.

Bathrooms should be tailored to the needs of the users in your home and also reflect your lifestyle. With this in mind, consider incorporating some of the following products and ideas that we've identified as the latest trends for 2011:

1. **Spa features.** Many homeowners we work with enjoy soaking and whirlpool tubs, showers with multiple jets, special heating units, multiple sinks, versatile lighting, media equipment and other luxury items in their master bathrooms. Amenities can also include a walk-in closet, exercise equipment, a coffee maker or even a fireplace.
2. **Heated floors.** Central New York mornings and evenings can be very cold. Heated floors add comfort to bathrooms and the heating units can be installed under tile or laminate flooring.
3. **Furniture style cabinetry, vanities and accent pieces.** The National Kitchen and Bath Association's [Inspiration Gallery](#) shows a number of bathrooms with furniture style cabinetry and accent pieces, Furniture style cabinets work well in powder rooms and are also elegant additions in master bathrooms.
4. **Walk-in showers.** [Walk-in in showers](#) can be a room within a room or can occupy a corner space of a bathroom. They can be equipped with a traditional showerhead, a hand held spray or multiple. Many homeowners are replacing tubs with deluxe showers.
5. **Stone flooring and wall accents.** Natural stone and pebble flooring is a [hot trend in bathroom design](#). Porcelain tile and laminates are also made to replicate natural stone and offer a cost-effective option if you like the look.
6. **Shower seats.** Shower seats are great for [storing](#) bathroom essentials like soaps and hair care products but they also provide support for an individual who cannot stand in a shower an a place to sit for a relaxing shower experience.
7. **Safety accessories.** Stylish grab bars located in tub and shower areas are designed to appear as though they are towel bars and will support an adult's weight up to 350 lbs. Consider "[Universal Design](#)" features when planning your bathroom.

2. Functional Bathroom Design Trends

8. **Water efficient faucets and toilets.** Most water consumption in a home occurs in the bathroom. [Save on water bills](#) and help the environment by installing low volume toilets and efficient faucets.
9. **Granite vanity and counter surfaces.** Granite continues to be favored among homeowners for its beauty and durability. Not only is it being used in bathrooms on vanities but it is also used with tubs. If your budget is limited consider using new granite look laminate products.
10. **Natural lighting.** Think about [adding a skylight or sun tunnel](#) to your bathroom space. Natural lighting not only illuminates the space but also is great if you want to grow plants in the room.
11. **Go “Green”.** Install a [solar water heater](#) to save on your energy bills and to be eco-friendly.
12. **Add decorative faucets and hardware.** Personalize your space by choosing from hundreds of decorative products designed for bathroom.

If you're looking for some state of the art and futuristic features check out [HGTV](#). Several of their designers visited a trade show and saw new products which include glass counter surfaces and panels, body drying units which save on use of towels, low flow toilets and even a space saving machine that washes, then dries up to nine pounds of laundry and is small enough to install in a bathroom.



3. How to Create More Bathroom Storage Space

No matter the size, it seems that bathrooms always fail to adequately accommodate the items we want to have in there. Clutter is a challenge too, especially with the many small and oddly shaped items we tend to keep.

What's the solution? We've found that more and better bathroom storage space can solve most homeowner's bathroom storage problems.

Here are **9 ideas** that may help you.

1. **Vanities.** Vanities are the central storage unit in most bathrooms. The [National Kitchen and Bath Association](#) recommends vanities be 32 to 43 inches high depending on the user's needs (seated or standing). Most vanities contain at least one sink and require plumbing that may be hidden behind a cabinet door. If you're shopping for a vanity consider:
 - Pullout shelves to make it easy to access contents.
 - Drawer dividers to store cosmetics, jewelry and other small bathroom items.
 - In a small bathroom consider cabinets that are 16 to 18 inches deep instead of the usual 21 inches.
 - Tilt-out drawers for hair brushes, combs or tooth brushes.
 - A hamper for dirty clothes.
2. **Storage for Cosmetics.** Countertop level cabinets, like appliance "garages" in a kitchen, are ideal for storing make-up and grooming products. The packaging of many cosmetic items (i.e. mascara, lipstick, facial make up, lotions and fragrances) makes it difficult to store these products on shelves. Small cosmetics can be stored in vanity drawers with dividers to keep items from jamming drawers and creating clutter. Baskets and caddies can be used to store cosmetics in cabinets or be placed on shelves.
3. **Medicine Cabinets.** Medicine cabinets are common fixtures in most bathrooms and are often a narrow depth cabinet hidden by a mirror. The narrow depth makes it easy to find medications. When storing pharmaceuticals in a bathroom, read the drug information you receive at the pharmacy to learn if the medication is affected by temperature or humidity.

3. How to Create More Bathroom Storage Space

4. **Linen Closets.** Built-in linen closets with shelves are the ideal place to store towels and bed linens. As a general rule, each household member should have four bath towels, four hand towels and six washcloths. If your space is limited use fewer towels but launder them more frequently. In small bathroom “linen towers” (tall narrow shelving with doors) can provide needed storage. For more efficient shelf storage, add wire organizers and baskets to neatly store items. If your space is really small, try storing towels in a wine rack. Simply roll them up and place them in bottle slots.



5. **Wall Storage.** Open shelves affixed to a wall can also provide a solution for storing towels and grooming products. Use multiple towel bars mounted to walls to hold items other than towels by adding hook-on caddies for magazines, cotton balls and swabs, lotions, bath salts, bubble bath etc. Add shelves above a toilet to extend storage space.

6. **Door Storage.** The back of a bathroom door can provide much needed storage in a small bathroom. Hooks placed on a door can hold robes and towels. A door can also accommodate a shelf or towel bars. Don't forget the backs of cabinet doors. Narrow shelves can be added to hold hair dryers, cotton swabs, soap bars, hair brushes and other small items.
7. **Shower storage.** Shower storage was once limited to in-the-wall soap dishes, awkward wire shower caddies, pole shelves that would break easily and the rim of a tub. Today's shower units feature easy to clean built-in shelves and shower seats, look for these features if you're remodeling your bathroom.
8. **Freestanding Storage.** Freestanding furniture pieces and cabinets are another way to add storage space to your bathroom, especially if you have a pedestal sink and don't want to install a vanity. Étagères work well for storing towels and baskets filled with bathroom essentials. Storage benches provide both a place to sit when you are grooming and a place to store bath linens and other items. A narrow table with one or two lower shelves can be utilized as a vanity if you hang a mirror above or place a make-up/shaving mirror on it.
9. **Baskets and caddies.** Baskets and caddies are a great way to organize and store "the stuff" that we use daily. Provide a basket or caddy for each user of the bathroom to store their personal items.

For more ideas, visit [HGTV Bathroom Storage](#) and [Better Homes and Gardens: 22 Bathroom Storage Ideas](#).

4. Tips for Designing a Safe and Accessible Bathroom

A friend of mine was talking about the experience of caring for her elderly mother and noted, "I never thought our family home (a two story cape, built in the early 1950s) could be so hazardous." One of her most difficult tasks was helping her mother to the bathroom. "The bathroom is next door to her bedroom but with her walker the halls and doorways are too narrow," she complained. "Although we installed grab bars and purchased a shower seat, it's hard to lift her into the tub. I don't know how long she will be able to live at home."

Homes can become hazardous not only for older adults but even for those with temporary mobility impairments like a teen who breaks a leg in football practice or a person recovering from surgery.

If you're planning to update or remodel a bathroom consider the following "[Universal Design](#)" adaptations to improve access and safety in your home:

1. Install a no-threshold walk-in **shower** or mini-threshold water dam shower with minimum dimensions of 5 feet by 3 feet.
2. Add a built-in **shower seat**.
3. Place **grab bars** in the shower, tub and near the toilet.
4. Install several **showerheads**, including a hand-held adjustable height showerhead with easy to operate controls.
5. Widen the **doorway** to 36 inches in the bathroom entrance.
6. If possible, allow for **maneuvering space**. Ideally, allocate space to accommodate a 60 inch turning radius.
7. Replace twist handle **faucets** with lever handle, anti-scald faucets.
8. Consider installing a pedestal **sink**. Not only are they attractive, but the sink is accessible to those in your home who use a walker, wheelchair or crutches.
9. If you are installing a **vanity**, mount the sink bowl close to the edge for easier use and select **cabinetry** with easy-glide drawers that close automatically.
10. **Toilets** should be centered 18 inches from any sidewall, tub or cabinet and the seat should be 18 to 19 inches off the floor for older persons, lower for children.

4. Tips for Designing a Safe and Accessible Bathroom

11. Replace round **door knobs** with lever handle knobs.
12. Install **lighting** to provide good visibility when using the shower, tub, sink and toilet. Also, add a night light.

Many bathrooms are part of a master bedroom suite or located just outside the bedroom. To make your bedroom space more accommodating:

- Add a **night light**.
- Install additional electrical **outlets** to accommodate technology or future medical equipment.
- Fit **closets** with multi-level clothing rods or multi-level pullout drawers and shelving. Don't use bi-fold doors on closets because they can be difficult to open and close.

The television show "This Old House" has an interesting ["how-to" video on Choosing Universal-Design Bath Fixtures](#). Also, AARP offers a [home accessibility checklist for bathrooms](#).



5. Product Resource Guide

One of the services we provide for our clients is helping them shop for items that will make their bathroom both functional and distinctive. Our Project Consultants accompany our clients to showrooms and local vendors to help them select items appropriate for their design plan.

Many of our clients start by going through magazines and searching Web sites to identify products they want installed in their new bathroom.

The Internet is a good place to start. Since clients are often busy, searching for products in showrooms can be time consuming and tedious. Checking out products online can save time and enable homeowners to compare products with the click of a mouse.

Here are some of the Web sites we often recommend to homeowners to browse for bathroom fixtures and décor. The list begins with Kohler products because they are popular and their Web site features videos discussing selection of bathroom products.

Shower Enclosures/Bases

- [Kohler Enclosures](#)
- [Kohler Bases](#)
- [American Standard](#)
- [Swanstone Enclosures](#)
- [Swanstone Bases](#)

Shower Doors

- [Kohler](#)
- [Basco](#)

Shower Heads and Handheld Showers

- [Kohler](#)
- [American Standard](#)
- [Moen](#)

Shower Faucets

- [Kohler](#)
- [American Standard](#)
- [Moen](#)

5. Product Resource Guide

Bathtubs

- [Kohler](#)
- [American Standard](#)
- [Swanstone](#)

Sinks

- [Kohler](#)
- [American Standard](#)
- [Swanstone](#)

Sink Faucets

- [Kohler](#)
- [American Standard](#)
- [Moen](#)



Toilets and Lids

- [Kohler](#)
- [American Standard toilets](#)
- [American Standard toilet seats and tank lids](#)
- [Toto](#)

Flooring

- [Armstrong Flooring](#)
- [Daltile Flooring](#)
- [Dobkin Tile](#)

Counter Surfaces

- [Busch Products](#)
- [Roma Tile](#)
- [Avonite](#)
- [Caesarstone](#)
- [Corian \(Dupont\)](#)
- [LG Hi-Macs](#)
- [Silestone](#)
- [Zodiaq \(Dupont\)](#)

5. Product Resource Guide

Lighting

- [Edward Joy Electric](#)
- [Solvay Electric](#)
- [Kichler](#)
- [Sea Gull Lighting](#)

Bathroom Tile

- [Best Tile](#)
- [Daltile](#)
- [Dobkin Tile](#)
- [Roma Tile](#)

Cabinets

- [Jim Bishop](#)

Bathroom Accessories

- [Kohler](#)
- [American Standard](#)
- [Moen](#)
- [Swanstone](#)

Bathroom Safety /Universal Design Features

- [Swanstone](#)



6. Design Ideas Resource Guide

When planning their bathroom remodeling project, many of our clients tell us they prepared by purchasing home remodeling magazines, looking through bathroom product catalogues and visiting Websites to gather ideas and identify products they would like to use in their projects.

There are many good Websites to help you plan for your bathroom remodeling project. Here are a few online **bathroom design idea resources** that we believe you will find most helpful:

1. **McClurg's Bathroom Gallery.** Inspirational photos of [bathroom remodeling projects we have done for Central New York homeowners](#) are available on our Website. You will find both upscale and midrange bathroom renovations in our photo gallery.
2. **National Kitchen and Bath Association Tips for a Functional Bathroom.** [NKBA has compiled a list of tips](#) to consider in planning your bathroom remodeling project and has a link to photos of projects featuring some of the latest trends in bathroom design.
3. **HGTV.** HGTV's Website contains a wealth of information and is continually updated to showcase design ideas, current trends and product innovations. One of the best online is [HGTV's Designer Portfolio](#) with hundreds of photos of bathroom projects.
4. **AARP Universal Design Home Accessibility Checklist.** [AARP offers design guidelines](#) for homeowners to incorporate into their bathroom remodeling projects to create safe bathrooms that can be used by everyone ranging from small children to older adults and those with disabilities. You will want to check out this Website as you plan your project. You will also find webinars that discuss how to plan your project.
5. **This Old House.** The television show "This Old House" is the forerunner of all the home improvement shows that are broadcast today. On the [This Old House Website](#) you will find up-to-date information on bathroom renovation projects and videos that demonstrate in detail the process of remodeling a bathroom.
6. **Better Homes and Gardens Bathroom Design Ideas.** [Better Homes and Gardens](#) has a great Website to help you plan your bathroom remodeling project. Their magazine publishes a quarterly guide featuring both kitchen and bathroom projects that you will find in supermarkets, bookstores, home improvement stores and news stands.



McClurg

Remodeling & Construction Services

Your Dream. Our Team.

60 East Main Street • Marcellus, NY 13108 315-673-2051
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McClurg Remodeling & Construction Services
www.McClurgTeam.com