



HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO BATHROOM REMODELING

Walk-in Shower Design Ideas



ABOUT NEAL'S



In 1972 Neal's Construction Company, Inc. began and has since grown into one of the top 2% of all remodeling contractors in the United States. Neal Hendy's sons, Neal Jr., Steve, and Alan, and Neal's daughter, Leanne, joined the team. Over the years, many design, innovation, and quality awards have been earned from the local and national media, trade associations, and national trade publications. However, the real success at Neal's Design•Remodel has been the people working together to plan and construct our clients' home dreams into reality. Our goal is solving home improvement living needs, within the budgets of our clients, by delivering a superior product through quality service. We never lose sight of the fact that our future in this industry depends on how we "wow" our customers today.

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FORWARD

One of the most desired features in bathroom remodeling is a walk-in shower. As we work with homeowners on bath remodeling projects, many of our customers ask about adding a walk-in shower. With today's busy lifestyles it's no wonder.

Walk-in showers are easier to maintain and provide accessibility to people of all ages. Anyone with young children knows the difficulty of lifting tots in and out of a bathtub. If you have ever broken a leg, tubs are an obstacle to deal with. For older adults, a walk-in shower with a bench, handheld showerhead, grab bars and a level threshold makes bathing a safer experience.

Walk-in showers can fit almost anywhere. They can be customized to fit a space as small as 3-by-3 feet, installed in a corner or irregular floor space, or integrated with a tub. They also can be fashioned without doors for aesthetics and easy maintenance.

We have compiled this "Walk-in Shower Design Ideas" guide to help you plan your project. Since we get so many questions about adding a walk-in shower to a bathroom remodeling project we have included information about design options and features that you can add to make your shower a comfortable and safe experience.

The guide begins with questions we are frequently asked by our customers. It includes design ideas that show many products and options. It provides information about the essentials, from showerheads to body sprays. In it you will find accessories that add comfort as well as details about lighting, ventilation and "Universal Design" features that make bathrooms accommodating and safe for all users.

In various sections of the guide we've noted the importance of working with a [bath design professional](#). Bathrooms are small spaces that present complex issues during the course of remodeling. This guide is intended to help you ask the right questions and focus on important facets of your project when you meet with a designer or contractor.

We hope you find the guide helpful. Please call us or [register on our website](#) to schedule a complimentary in-home consultation for your walk-in shower project.

The Neal's Design•Remodel Team

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Walk-in showers are one of the hottest trends in today's homes. Many homeowners are foregoing tub-shower combinations for the comfort and convenience of a walk-in shower with a low or level threshold and multiple showerheads. Walk-in showers are popular among people of all ages from young professionals to empty-nesters and all those in between. Yet before remodeling homeowners often ask questions about whether or not it would be possible to install a walk-in shower in their home and how it may impact the value of their home.

If you're considering a bathroom remodeling project here are six questions that our designers and project consultants are often asked by customers:

1. What are the space requirements for a walk-in shower?

Bathrooms are often designed as small spaces. The standard size of a bathroom in many homes is 5-by-7 feet or 35 square feet. The minimum size of a shower pan base for a walk-in shower is 36-by-36 inches. The smallest neo-angle shower base, one that will fit into the corner of a room, is also 36 inches wide by 36 inches deep. Many walk-in showers are custom-built and can be designed to conform to your space.

2. What are the plumbing requirements for a walk-in shower?

If you are using a pre-fabricated shower pan, it will be pitched for drainage and have a 2 inch pipe opening in the base. For a custom-tile base, the opening is generally the same. Installation of plumbing will vary depending on the showerhead, or showerheads, you select. Showerheads can be installed on a wall or ceiling.

Discuss your ideas with a design professional if you are planning a bathroom addition or expanding the space of a bathroom to install a shower with wall jets, steam bath or multiple showerheads. Options for adding expanded space and features may include installing an additional hot water tank to accommodate your needs.



3. Will having a bath with a walk-in shower and no tub impact the resale of a home?

Resale will be impacted by many factors. Realtors usually advise having at least one tub in a home to appeal to a range of buyers. Check with neighbors to see if they have forfeited a tub in favor of a walk-in shower when they've made bath improvements. If you live in a condo or townhouse where bathrooms are small, a walk-in shower may make your unit more attractive to potential buyers because it can make a small room seem larger and it is easy to maintain.

If you plan to stay in your home for ten years or more, changes you make today may not matter. If resale is imminent, it is helpful to consult a realtor who understands market trends in your locale and buyer preferences before remodeling.



4. What are the benefits of a walk-in shower without doors?

The two primary advantages of a walk-in shower without doors are accessibility, particularly for people with ambulatory impediments, and easy maintenance because there is no door frame that can collect water and where soap residue will build up.

5. How much do walk-in showers cost?

The cost of a walk-in shower is determined by the products you select and the cost of the labor required for installation. With that said, costs will also be influenced by the amenities you add such as a shower bench, niches, multiple showerheads, wall jets and lighting. Pre-fabricated bases and surrounds for the shower cost considerably less than a custom tile base and surround.

6. How much maintenance is required for a walk-in shower?

A walk-in shower with or without doors is much easier to clean than a tub/shower combo where you have to scrub the tub and walls to remove residue. Just squeegee the doors and surround after use. If you have a tile surround, wipe down the grout to avoid mildew.



WALK-IN SHOWER DESIGN OPTIONS

A custom-built walk-in shower can optimize your bathroom space and be designed to include the accessories you want or need. Walk-in showers can be designed to fit almost any bathroom space and can be integrated with a soaking tub. We recommend working with a [bathroom design professional](#) to properly size the shower for the room, create a functional and aesthetic plan and to show you the many new products available for your project.

There are **three** fundamental design options to consider for walk-in showers:

1. Walk-In Showers with Doors

Glass shower doors and enclosures can create an illusion of depth and height in a bathroom, especially if the room is small. They can be clear smooth surfaces or textured glass to provide privacy.

Glass doors for walk-in showers are either hinged doors or sliding doors on a track. Hinged doors can be installed with a glass or tile surround. The advantage of a hinged door is that it is easier to clean. However, there is a door swing to account for in the room which can present a problem in a small, tight space.

Sliding doors eliminate the door swing and may be the best option for a small narrow bathroom but may require more width in the room to install. Sliding doors tend to be more difficult to clean than hinged doors because they overlap and have a narrow track where debris can build up.

2. Walk-In Showers Without Doors

More homeowners are opting for a walk-in shower without doors because of the ease of maintenance and access. The design of a walk-in shower without doors should consider containment of water, drainage, the placement of showerheads and handheld showers, lighting and ventilation.

A walk-in shower without doors can be designed with a level threshold by sloping the floor towards the drain.



Custom walk-in shower with granite accents and river rock tile.



Custom shower with a glass wall.



Space saving walk-in shower with a hinged door and tile surround.



A walk-in shower with sliding doors in a narrow bathroom space.



Walk-in shower with a decorative glass wall and no door.



Walk-in shower with a level threshold and no door.

3. Walk-In Showers with Privacy Walls

Privacy is always an important consideration in bath design, especially if two people are sharing a bathroom. Privacy walls can be built for both walk-in showers with and without doors and can add an aesthetic architectural element to a bathroom.

Another way to provide privacy in a walk-in shower is to add a knee wall to create a screen (as seen in the bottom photo on page 3). Privacy can also be attained by a well-designed wall, which also helps to contain water in a walk-in shower. A decorative glass and tile wall provides both privacy and contains the spray of water in this doorless walk-in shower.

TILE DESIGN IDEAS

Tile is the perfect wall and floor surface for a bathroom because of its resistance to humidity and water. Tiled surfaces are generally easy to clean and maintain. When used as flooring, textured tiles can help prevent slips and falls.

If you are planning to remodel a bathroom, consider these **tips for choosing the right tile product for your project**:

1. Selecting Bathroom Tile

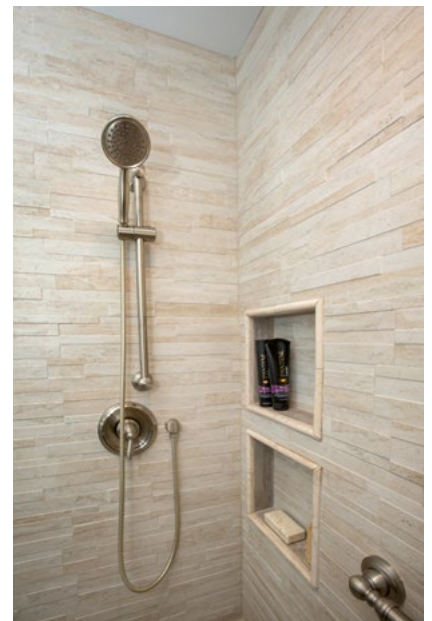
When selecting wall tile for a bathroom, consider who will use the bathroom and how they will use the space. Tile selected for a children's bathroom should be bright and easy to maintain. 4-by-4 inch ceramic tile might be the perfect choice. In a master suite spa, natural stone would set the mood. For a busy working couple with little time for cleaning the bathroom, subway tile would function well.

2. Ceramic Wall Tile

The most common [tile for bathrooms](#) is 4-by-4 inch square ceramic tile. For years, homeowners have selected these tiles because of the range of colors, utility and price.

3. Subway Tile

A classic tile commonly used in both baths and kitchens is 3-by-6 inch subway tile. In a small bathroom or shower, classic white subway tiles reflect light and create a feeling of space. Subway tile is also available in colors and in [marble](#), which you will see featured in many [design sources](#).



4. Easy-Care Tile

In a bathroom, fewer grout lines to clean is a plus. Grout in a 3-by-6 inch subway tile layout has about the same amount of grout lines as 4-by-4 inch tile. The real difference is seen when using bigger tiles such as 12-by-12 inch.

5. Natural Stone Tile

Many people like the look of marble, travertine, slate or pebbled tile in a bathroom. [Natural stone](#) requires special care but that should not be a deterrent. The stone should be pre-treated with sealer then regularly sealed. Cleaning involves mixing a few drops of dish soap with water and using a scrub brush. If mildew is a problem, professional steam cleaning will solve it.

6. Other Tile

Two contemporary tile products that are growing in popularity are recycled glass tile and pebble tile. [Mosaic glass tile](#) is also being used to add sparkle to a bathroom as a full wall, backsplash or accent tile, or for flooring.

7. Border Tiles to Accentuate Wall and Floor Tile

[Border tile](#) is often used to break up long stretches of wall tile and give architectural definition to a room. Typically, a border tile is a narrow strip of tile. Borders can be dimensional or a contrasting color. They also can be formed by using more than one type of tile to create a strong expressive design. Border tile can be used to accentuate doors, mirrors and sinks, or form a chair rail. Since they have visual appeal, they should be logical, coherent accents in the room.



Walk-in shower with mosaic glass tile border.

SHOWERHEADS AND BODY SPRAYS

One of the most important fixtures in any shower is the showerhead. Showerheads and accessory options can make a shower as relaxing as a warm bath.

Here are **six** types of showerheads to consider for your project:

1. Multiple Showerheads

A hot trend in bathroom design today is adding multiple showerheads in various combinations to create a spa-like experience at home. You may want to consider an [energy saving showerhead](#) that uses less hot water. Showerheads are rated by the amount of water used per minute. An efficient showerhead is one that uses 2.5 gallons per minute (gpm) or less.

2. Wall Mount Showerheads

Most people choose a standard wall mount showerhead for their bathrooms. Wall mounted showerheads are adjustable and come with settings to control the flow of water. There are many sizes, styles and finishes to choose from, including popular rain showerheads.

3. Ceiling Mount Showerheads

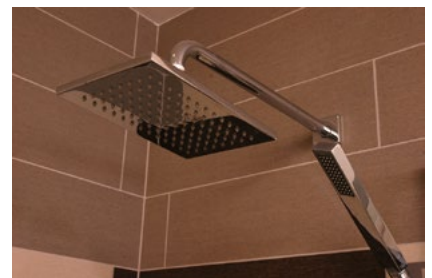
Ceiling or top-mount showerheads provide an overhead spray of water. Rainfall showerheads were made to be mounted on the ceiling. Manufacturers offer them in a range of shapes and sizes and some are designed to be flush-mounted.

4. Handheld Showerheads

A handheld showerhead is attached with a gooseneck hose and can be a primary showerhead in a shower stall or a second showerhead for rinsing your hair, washing young children or cleaning the shower stall. When coupled with a standard showerhead, turn on both showers together and you will feel as though you are in a spa. Handheld showers can be wall-mounted on a rod and adjusted to your height.



Wall mounted rain showerhead, handheld shower on an adjustable rod and body spray jets.



Wall mounted rain showerhead with wand style handheld shower.



Ceiling mounted rainfall showerhead.

5. Wall Mount Body Sprays

Wall mount body sprays can add to the comfort of taking a shower. They are installed in custom baths. Some come with adjustable heads to control the force of the water and create a gentle mist or a massage shower. Sprays can be jetted or rain showerheads. Body sprays should be installed according to your height. Heights of all users should be considered. The lowest spray should be knee height, the middle spray waist height and the upper spray shoulder height. When mounted on opposite walls, the sprays cross.

6. Showerheads with Speakers

Kohler has many innovative designs for the shower. The latest is a showerhead with wireless speakers to play your favorite music. Kohler's "Moxie" showerhead is also eco-friendly and uses 2-to-2.5 gpm to conserve water.



Wall mounted body sprays.

ACCESSORIES

Steam Baths

Steam baths are the ultimate home spa experience. The steam can be soothing and adds moisture to your skin to make it smooth and supple. There are other benefits of steam especially if you suffer with sore muscles, arthritis, asthma or sinus problems. To install a steam bath, the shower must be fully enclosed and the recommended height of the enclosure is 8 feet or less. A shower bench is also recommended. Multiple showerheads can be added for those days when you don't have time to enjoy a relaxing steam bath.

Shower Benches

While most people prefer to shower standing, there are times when all of us could use a shower bench. If you've ever had a temporary or long-term disability, suffer with arthritis or shave your legs, a shower bench is a plus.

Shower seats are great for storing bathroom essentials such as soaps and hair care products. They also provide support for an individual who cannot stand in a shower and a place to sit for a relaxing shower experience. One of the latest innovations is **heated shower seats**. A heating unit can be installed under tile to add warmth to your shower floor, walls and yes, the seat.



Top Left: Mr. Steam steam bath controls. Bottom Left: Ceiling installed steam misters. Right: Shower with steam bath, wall mounted and hand held showerheads, grab bar, bench seat and wall niche.



Elongated shower bench with quartz seat in the shower stall.

Shelves and Built-In Niches

When planning a shower, consider niches and a shower bench to hold shampoo, hair conditioner and soaps.

Grab Bars

The primary benefit of installing grab bars in a bathroom is safety. According to the [National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), each year 21.8 million people age 15 and older are injured in non-fatal bathroom falls, resulting in \$67.3 billion in medical costs. Grab bars help to reduce injuries. [Bath design professionals](#) have taken note and creatively include functional, attractive grab bars in their plans.

When grab bars were first used in baths they were often unsightly but were an important safety feature. Today, manufacturers offer a range of attractive designs that blend with cabinet hardware and towel fixtures. - See more in our blog post, [Universal Design A Hot Trend in Bathroom Remodeling](#).

Heated Towel Racks

Think about hanging a towel rack on the back of a door or in the wall space behind for towels. [Heated towel bars](#) are a great innovation and provide both a storage solution and comfort in a bathroom.



Walk-in shower with built-in niche and shelf that provide storage for bath supplies.



Curbless walk-in shower without doors, wide entryway, slip resistant flooring, low niches and a grab bar.

LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

Bathrooms are susceptible to mold due to the humidity caused by using showers and tubs in a confined area. While it helps to have a window in a bathroom, windows don't provide sufficient **ventilation** particularly in winter months. Fans can help to control this problem and also help to eliminate objectionable odors.

When planning to remodel a bathroom consider the placement of **lighting** for grooming and other tasks such as viewing contents of cabinets, showering and bathing, and nightlights for safety.

1. Fan/Lights

Fan/lights are designed expressly for bathrooms and provide both ventilation and lighting. Manufacturers are creating new styles of fan/lights with decorative globes and trims to provide more stylish options. Two popular product lines on the list are Broan-Nutone and Panasonic.

Broan-Nutone offers over 50 models that provide consumers with a range of choices. Broan-Nutone has been in the business of manufacturing **bath and ventilation fans** for over 79 years. What distinguishes their products from others is:

- These fans use up to 65 percent less energy than standard fans.
- Models include low profile grilles that blend into ceilings. The grilles also have superior light lenses that disperse light to reduce the number of lights needed in the room.
- Fan/lights are available with humidity sensing options that turn on and off automatically when humidity rises then returns to normal levels.
- Fan/lights are quiet and inconspicuous. These fans quickly ventilate a room and are extremely quiet.
- Broan-Nutone fan/lights can be operated in any combination – fan, light and nightlight.
- The units are UL listed for safe use over bathtubs and showers when connected to a GFCI protected circuit.

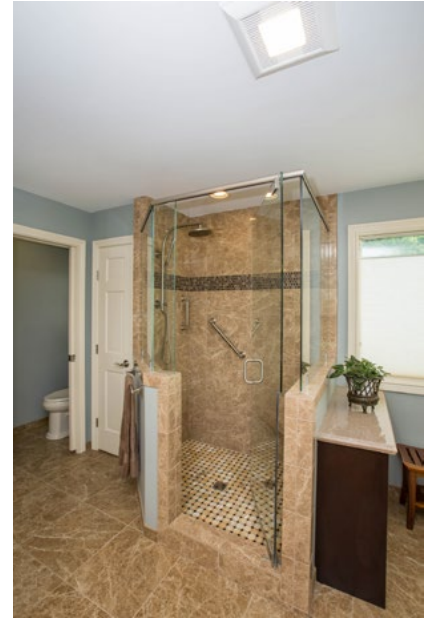


Panasonic makes a “[Whisperlite](#)” fan/light that is quiet and provides bright lighting with a 32-watt compact fluorescent bulb and 4-watt night light for safety. It also has a built-in damper to prevent back-draft that brings cold outside air into a bathroom. According to the manufacturer, Whisperlite fans are designed for long life and durability. While the styles are limited, performance is efficient.

2. Shower and Tub Lighting

Many homeowners choose recessed lights for a shower and tub. They can be placed either directly over the shower or tub, or just outside the space. Natural light can also be used to illuminate these areas by adding a skylight or sun tunnel or installing the tub or shower near a window.

When selecting bathroom lighting, consult a [bathroom design professional](#) who can show you a range of products including some of the newer innovations. Also, talk with your contractor about installing fan/lights. It is very important when a fan is vented that it is not vented into the attic or soffit and that it is vented to the exterior, otherwise all of that moist air can build up and cause mold or rot.



UNIVERSAL DESIGN FEATURES

Safety, comfort and access are essential to the design of any bathroom. Home accidents often occur in a bathroom. **Universal Design** elements can be used in walk-in showers for safety and accessibility. The National Association of Home Builders defines “Universal Design” as:

“The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

When planning a bath remodel consider the following:

- **Slip-Resistant Flooring**
- **Wider Entryways of at Least 36 Inches**
- **Level or Low Threshold in the Shower**
- **A Shower Without a Door**
- **Grab Bars That Double as Towel Bars**
- **Lever Handles on Doors and Faucets**
- **Wall-Mount Sinks**
- **A Handheld Showerhead**
- **A Shower Bench**
- **A Toilet 16-to-18 inches in Height**



Universal Design features are subtle and stylish but have a purpose. The concept has been promoted to make homes more livable for a lifetime of use. According to the National Kitchen and Bath Association, 60 percent of designers surveyed for its 2014 Design Trends Survey say they are including Universal Design features in their bathroom projects. Bathroom safety is important to every homeowner. If you're planning to remodel a bathroom take some time to consider the details that will make the room comfortable, functional and safe for all users.

Visit our
DESIGN CENTER

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Sign-up for Complimentary Initial Consultation

Now that you've got a better idea of what you might want in your kitchen remodel, it's the perfect time to contact us! One of our project consultants will visit your home to discuss your remodeling project with you. They will give you an overview of Neal's, answer your questions, and listen to your ideas.



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Still not sure about your kitchen remodel? Every month, Neal's Design hosts free seminars at our 5,500 sq. ft. showroom about home remodeling. Our team discusses many of the ways you can get the kitchen and bath of your dreams and stay on budget. While at the showroom, we'd be happy to discuss your project further!



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