

Building an Organized Bathroom

By Linda A. Birkinbine of Keep It Organized, LLC

You and your client have discussed the new home's bathrooms at length. You've guided them through decisions about countertops, cabinets, tubs, showers, toilets, floors, windows, sinks, faucets and lights. But how much did you discuss their storage needs?

The master bathroom is generally one of the home's smallest rooms, but it has the largest of jobs. It's increasingly being used as a retreat to soothe the stresses of daily living. Master baths may serve multiple family members, perhaps at once. Other full baths may serve children, teens, guests or all of these.

Bathrooms have tremendous storage needs. How and where are all the supplies going to be stored? Towels, toilet paper, cleaners, toiletries, makeup, hair products, accessories, appliances and bath toys are among the items needing storage consideration. Note that medicine is not on the list—heat and humidity make the bathroom a poor choice for storing over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

What is an architect or builder to do? As you interview your clients about how they want their bathroom to look and feel, ask them how it will function. How many people—and who—will use it? Will family members use it at the same time as they rush to get out the door in the morning? What are your clients' shopping habits? Do they buy supplies in bulk or only as needed? How many personal care appliances do they use and need to store? Would a built-in sitting area be useful to facilitate conversation while one person is getting ready?

Once you have the answers to these questions, the bathroom should be “zoned” to accommodate different activities and privacy issues. Separating the toilet from the tub/shower area is an excellent example. Designating an area to install hooks for wet clothing and towels is another.

Help your clients maintain a serene and clutter-free bathroom. Consider multiple towel racks so everyone's towels can be hung up. In a child's bathroom, ask your clients if they prefer racks installed lower so little ones can hang up their own towels.

Suggest built-in closed storage such as closets and recessed medicine cabinets. Built-in open shelving can be used for storage as well as decorative display. Think about using built-ins in corners or high on walls. Another idea is to place faucets on the wall to free up counter space. Drawers in a bathroom cabinet are convenient. It's beneficial if each person has his or her own drawer to store personal items. Under-the-cabinet storage is enhanced by pull-out drawers for easy access.

Design details for storage in the bathroom can set an architect or builder apart. Today's bathroom has many roles to fill and belongings to store. Guide your clients to make decisions

that will enhance the quality of their lives by making their bathrooms functional as well as beautiful.

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