

## Convert bathtub to shower and save money, add luxury

Written by Jeb Breithaupt

Monday, 08 October 2012 08:29 -

---

Soaking in a hot bathtub after a tough day at work can relieve all kinds of aches, pains and stress. When is the last time you did that?

If you can't remember, you're not alone. The fact is, bathtubs get far less use than they once did. People are simply too busy to devote time to soaking and relaxing—so most of us take showers instead of baths.

So when you're ready to remodel your home's bathrooms, consider whether you want to spend money and use up space on a bathtub—or devote those resources to a shower with plenty of bells and whistles.

Before you tear out your bathtub/shower combination, though, consider:

- How large is your space? In an older house, a bathtub typically measures 60 inches long by 30 inches wide. If you squeeze a stand-alone shower into that space, you won't have much room. Consider whether your room has enough space to create a shower floor that's wider than the bottom of your old bathtub. About 32 inches is the narrowest space you should allot for a shower, and 36 inches is more comfortable. In fact, the wider, the better.

- How close is your shower/bathtub to the toilet or sink? You'll need enough clearance to lean in to turn on the water and to step in and out of the shower without running into another fixture. If it's too tight a fit, a bathtub with a showerhead might be a better choice than a wider, stand-alone shower.

- Do you have small children at home? If so, leave at least one tub in the home so you can use it to bathe the kids.

- Are you planning to sell? Likewise, families with small children often look for houses that feature at least one tub for their little ones' bath time. While replacing all of your tubs with roomy shower stalls might not devalue your home, it could make it someone's second choice if the bathtub is important to him or her.

- Is someone in your family an athlete? Soaking in a steamy tub after pulling a muscle or

## Convert bathtub to shower and save money, add luxury

Written by Jeb Breithaupt

Monday, 08 October 2012 08:29 -

---

lifting a heavy weights can become appealing in a hurry to someone who suffers a sports injury.

- Who will be using the shower? Showers are easier to get into and out of than bathtubs. Plus, a curbless shower allows someone using a walker or a wheelchair to enter and exit without much effort.

- How will you afford your new shower? Between tiling the walls, centering the floor drain, sloping the floor so the water flows toward the drain and upgrading the plumbing in the wall, installing a shower can get expensive. Plus, if you want to add body sprays and other luxury gadgets, you might need to upgrade the water supply pipes in the wall. The convenience and luxury of a shower is well worth the price; still, avoid sticker shock by understanding all of the costs up front.

- Are you energy conscious? If you have a flow restrictor on your shower head and you don't spend an extra-long time in the shower stall, taking a shower usually uses less energy than taking a bath. It also can save water: A typical bath uses between 30 gallons and 50 gallons of water. A four-minute shower with a low-flow shower head sends only about 10 gallons down the drain.

**Jeb Breithaupt, B. Arch., MBA, has been president of JEB Design/Build in Shreveport since 1983. You can contact him at 318-865-4914 or by visiting [www.Jeb.net](http://www.Jeb.net).**