THE ULTIMATE GUIDE ON BATHROOM RENOVATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Renovating can be a fun and rewarding process if done correctly, my aim for this book is to educate you about renovating and remodelling by de-constructing the entire bathroom renovation process and laying it out for you into an easy to follow format.

We have all seen the TV renovation shows that show a bathroom or a kitchen being renovated in a couple of days, but the problem with that is they fail to show all the months of planning that goes into any renovation before they even start on site. That is my aim here, I will break everything down into easy to follow steps that anyone wishing to project manage a bathroom renovation can take on for themselves.

Good Luck and happy renovating!

James Mason

HOW TO RENOVATE A BATHROOM: THE 5 STAGE PROCESS

In this ebook I'll be looking at the 5 Stage Renovation Process, focusing specifically on how to renovate a bathroom and project manage the entire job.

Each stage will be broken down into bite-size chunks for easy digestion. It will also be full of practical tips and builder's hacks to get you on the right path with your renovation.

This step-by-step approach will help you gain the knowledge and confidence to better manage your DIY bathroom renovation or at least know how to work with someone who is going to do it for you.

Whether it's your architect or your builder. Heck it could even be your Uncle Frank. No matter which way you go you'll be on top of things right from the start.

CREATED BY AN EXPERIENCED, LICENSED BUILDER: HOW TO RENOVATE A BATHROOM

This process has been something I've refined over the past two decades during my days running a building company in Sydney, Australia.

What I'll be showing you is exactly the process that I have used day in, day out on all my home builds and renovations. So you'll be getting first-hand experience in how to do and how not to do a bathroom renovation.

As with all home improvement projects, there is a rhythm and a flow to them. Certain things need to start before other jobs can progress. If you miss any of the essential steps then it could create a domino effect.

However, sometimes things don't always go according to plan, like unseasonal weather conditions, late supplier deliveries or even financing issues. When getting to grips with how to renovate a bathroom, this is one of the key things to get your head around.

But as with everything in life, the better you plan for contingencies, the better you'll be able to quickly deal with any set backs.

I find that keeping calm (and having a few beers!) always helps to even things out when the SHTF. So find your calm zone and make sure you use it during the renovation process.

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS THE 5 STAGE RENOVATION PROCESS?

The 5 stages can essentially be grouped into 3 core elements: Research, Planning, and Construction.

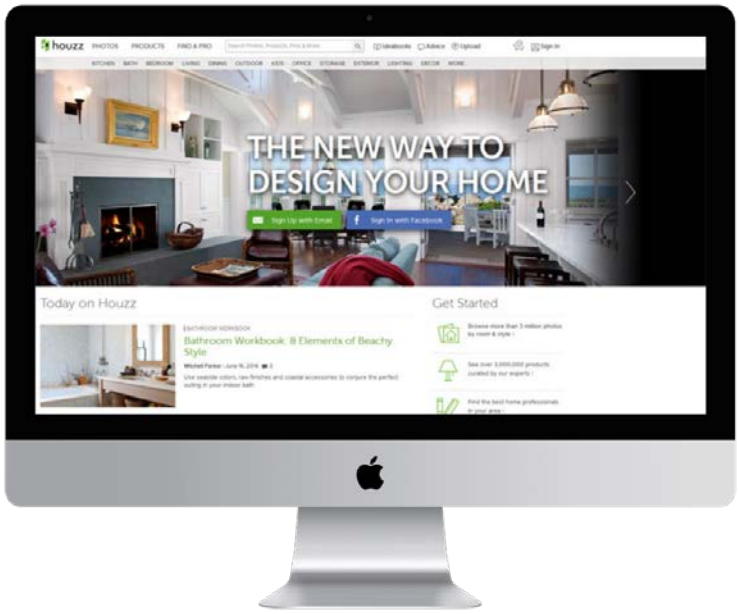
Below is a brief outline of each one.

STAGE 1: RESEARCH

As the name suggests, this is when you start gathering all your ideas together and work out what you'd like your bathroom to look like. It's probably the most fun part of the entire renovation process – although completing the job does run a very close second.

It's never been easier to source great designs, find inspiration, and learn how to renovate a bathroom. The previously exclusive world of interior design has now been cracked open for everyone to peek inside. And with no end of online websites catering for the home improvement addict, you can literally track down exactly what you're after in an afternoon.

Websites like Pinterest, Houzz and HiPages are a great start!



STAGE 2: PLANNING

Once you have a good idea of what you'd like your bathroom to look like, the next stage is putting everything in place and making sure you calculate your costs.

Things to consider now would be:

Plans & sketches

- Will you hire someone to do this?
- Draw your own plans with online software?
- Or sketch the plans on a scaled diagram?

Job file structure

- How will you get prepared & organized before the work begins?

Finishes schedule

- Selecting & documenting your bathroom finishes.

Budget Cost Calculator

- Using a bathroom remodel cost calculator to keep on top of your renovation budget.

STAGE 3: PRE CONSTRUCTION

Now we get to the hiring people and project timeline stage.

Finding contractors

- Who will you need for each job?
- Where can you find them?

Planning out your project timeline

- Who does what and when?

STAGE 4: CONSTRUCTION

Here we go! This is the meat and potatoes of the entire bathroom renovation. It's where everyone gets to work.

Some of the key areas you'll cover include:

- Demolition
- Carpentry
- New Services
- Wall Linings
- Waterproofing
- Tiling
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Painting
- Glass/Screens
- Joinery

STAGE 5: PROJECT COMPLETION

This is when you breathe a sigh of relief and pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

But before you do, there are always a few final last minute things to tidy up before you can enjoy your new bathroom.

So that's it in a nutshell. As you can see the 5 Stage Renovation Process flows in a logical way and will help guide you through your home improvement project.

Once you work through the process you'll certainly know how to renovate a bathroom like an expert.

STAGE 1: RESEARCH

1. WHERE TO FIND BATHROOM DESIGN IDEAS & INSPIRATION

When it comes to finding bathroom design ideas there are literally millions of places you could look for inspiration – both online & offline. And with such a huge range of options it can get overwhelming when it comes time to making decisions about which look and feel to go with.

If you're unsure of where to start or are feeling stuck then this article will help point you in the right direction.

SOURCING BATHROOM DESIGN IDEAS: THIS STAGE IS VERY ADDICTIVE!

The research stage is by far the most fun part of the renovation process (besides the demolition stage of course!). It's the time when you can literally go crazy and create your ultimate wishlist of design ideas without touching the bank account.

There are a couple of sites that I suggest you start looking to get bathroom design ideas and inspiration – here are my three top picks:

1. HOUZZ

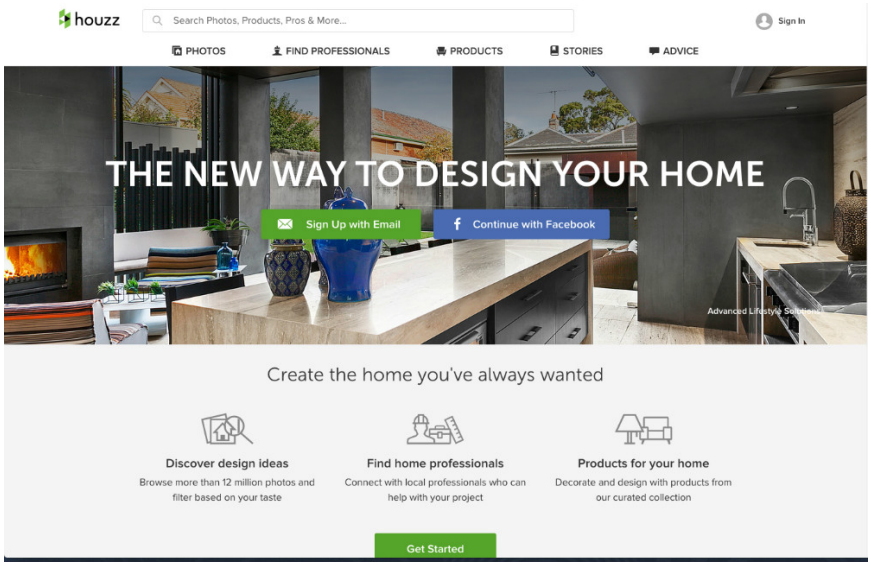
They in multiple countries worldwide including:

- Australia – http://www.houzz.com.au
- USA – http://www.houzz.com
- UK – http://www.houzz.co.uk
-

In case you haven't heard of Houzz before, here's some info:

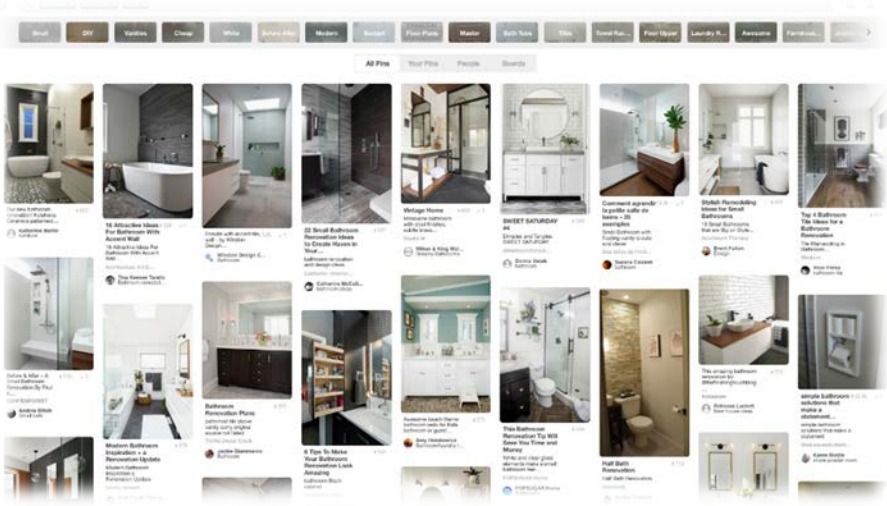
- It's a platform for home renovation and design.
- Brings together the homeowner and home professionals in a uniquely visual community.

- Browse and save beautiful home photos.
- Find the right design and construction professionals.
- Connect with others who have been there too.
- Houzz started as a side project but has become a community of more than 40 million.



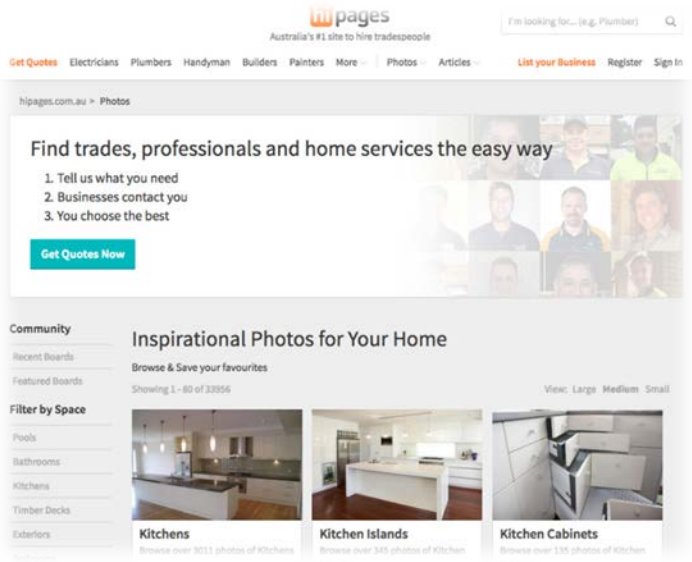
2. PINTEREST

- Main website – www.pinterest.com
- Most people have heard about Pinterest (well almost everyone!).
- It's a free social media network that allows users to visually share, and discover new interests by posting (known as 'pinning' on Pinterest) images or videos to their own or others' boards (i.e. a collection of 'pins,' usually with a common theme) and browsing what other users have pinned.
- Home improvement is only one of the topics you can find on Pinterest – there are loads more catering for all interests.
- If you're a newbie to Pinterest check out the help section – All About Pinterest Guide



3. HIPAGES

- Known as Home Improvement Pages.
- Australia's most visited building and renovation website.
- Platform for taking your building or renovation project from concept to completion.
- Connecting Australians with local trade professionals and home services for over 13 years.
- Has thousands of inspirational photos to get your creative juices going.



OTHER PLACES TO LOOK FOR IDEAS & INSPIRATION

Below is a list of some more places you can look.

Online

- Use Google/Bing for keyword searches

Magazines

- Great for making 'mood boards' the old fashioned way (i.e. cutouts).
- Also check out their website & social media for ideas.

Home décor retail outlets

- Great place to see complete room makeovers – IKEA does this really well.

Specialist bathroom showrooms

- Another great place to see finished bathrooms as well as touch/feel the fittings etc.

Fairs/Events open to the public

- Great for finding the latest trends, 'must-haves', and up-and-coming designers

Interior designer

- For those with deep pockets, you could hire an interior designer to do all the legwork for you.

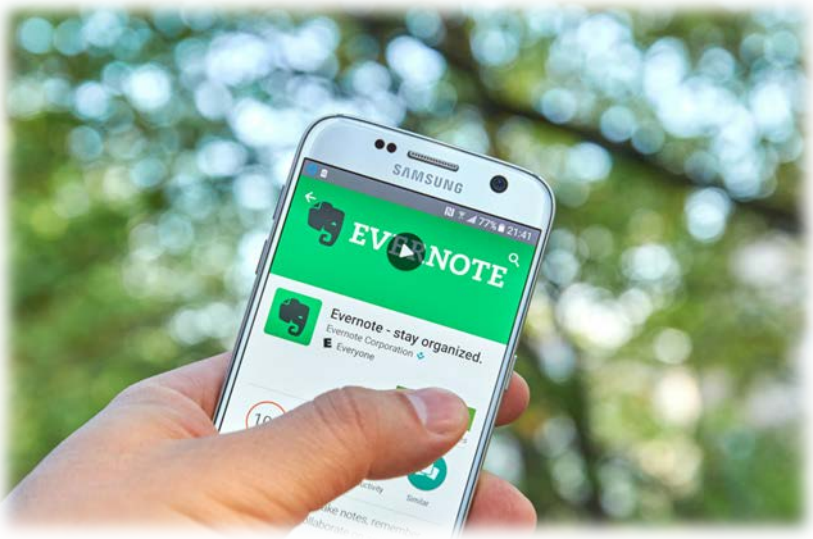
KEEPING ON TOP OF ALL YOUR INFORMATION

The next step is to start making a list of all the websites/places you've visited for ideas so that you don't forget where you found something that you liked.

Here are a few options on how to collate/organise everything:

1. Create a simple word document that lists all your finds in one area.
2. You can use online note taking software that allows you to save all your links into it.

A good one is Evernote – https://evernote.com. There are hundreds of note taking apps on the market, but Evernote is good because you can use it on various platforms like your PC, mobile phone and tablet, and they all sync to each other so you can see your notes anywhere.



I've written more about the best ways to collate and organise your bathroom design ideas in the next section.

WORD OF WARNING – BEWARE OF OVERWHELM

Be careful of falling into the 'analysis paralysis' zone. You know the place where you see so many things you like but are too scared of making a decision in case you choose the wrong one.

One way to overcome this is to make a list of things you absolutely have to have in your new bathroom. This could be a shower and bath combo, lots of storage etc. By narrowing down the field you can focus your attention on what's really important to you and ditch the stuff that's not.

If you do fall into the overwhelm trap – try taking a step back, stop looking and go for a walk/leave it for a while.

Sometimes the break can help clear your mind so it has time to mill over the choices in the background (subconsciously). A beer always helps too!

3. HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR BATHROOM MAKEOVER IDEAS

If you've ever done (or at least dreamed of doing) a home improvement project, you'll know that the first step is research. Scouring the Internet and beyond for great bathroom makeover ideas is a load of fun but all that info needs to be organised in a way that you can easily find it later.

COLLATING YOUR BATHROOM MAKEOVER IDEAS

Here are a few ways you can get on top of things.

1. FOLDER/FILING STRUCTURE

Before you start gathering all those great bathroom makeover ideas, work out a system to file the info – much like the folders in your filing cabinet. Believe me – it will save you a heap of time in the long run if you do this upfront.

Below is a list of categories to get the ball rolling but feel free to add more if you like.

- Toilet
- Shower
- Bath
- Sink
- Fixtures/Taps
- Lighting
- Flooring
- Walls
- Tiles
- Storage
- Décor
- Furniture/Cupboards
- Colour scheme

Choose a method that works best for you – it could be the list above, alphabetical, colour coded etc. Everyone has their own way of doing things – so there's no right or wrong way!

2. OFFLINE & ONLINE TOOLS & APPS

There are also some great offline & online tools/apps you can use to collate all your info in one place.

OFFLINE

WORD OR EXCEL

A lot of computers nowadays will come bundled with Microsoft Office (both PC and Mac) when purchased. The product suite consists of Word (text editor), Excel (spreadsheet), Powerpoint (presentations) and a number of other useful applications. You can find out more by heading over to the Microsoft site.

But if you want to do it on the cheap then there's a free alternative called OpenOffice.

TEXT EDITOR / NOTES

A text editor is like Word but without all the formatting options. Much like Microsoft Office, most computers come with a basic Text Editor. Also many mobile phones now also come with Notes (iPhone) or similar so you can even gather info on the go.

ONLINE

EVERNOTE

Evernote is a great option to organise your bathroom makeover ideas in one central place. As it's an online software service, you can access your account from any device with Internet connection. They also offer a free account as well as paid for plans.

GOOGLE DOCS

Google has its own online version of Word called Google Docs, and Excel called Google Sheets. If you have a Gmail account then you'll be able to access these for free. You can learn more here.

MICROSOFT ONENOTE

Microsoft OneNote is a note-taking and personal information management (PIM) application for collecting, organising and sharing digital information. It's basically Microsoft's online version of Evernote.

It's also the only Microsoft Office suite app you can download and use for free without a license to the suite or 365 subscription.

These are just a few suggestions – there are a lot of alternatives out there on the market. I have simply picked the ones I prefer to use but go ahead and choose whatever suits you.

So that covers the second part of Stage 1: Research – organising your bathroom makeover ideas.

STAGE 2: PLANNING

1. 3 WAYS TO GET YOUR BATHROOM FLOOR PLANS DONE

Once you're done with sourcing ideas and getting inspiration for your renovation project, you'll now need to draw up your bathroom floor plans.

This is the start of Stage 2: Planning and it's the process where you literally sift through your wishlist and work out where everything will appear in your new bathroom – to the centimetre!

Rule number 1- you always need a plan to work off so that you can be organized for success. Here are 3 ways that you can go about organizing your plans or sketches.

HOW TO DO YOUR BATHROOM FLOOR PLANS

Below I've outlined three options ranging from hiring someone, using online software, and even simple hand drawings.

OPTION 1: PAY TO HAVE YOUR PLANS DRAWN BY A DRAFTSMAN, ARCHITECT OR INTERIOR DESIGNER

Paying a professional to design your plans and sketches can be one of the best ways to kick off your bathroom renovation. But it will also be the most expensive option.

If you are time poor and don't have the confidence to draw something yourself (which are some of the other options below), then this would be the most stress free route.

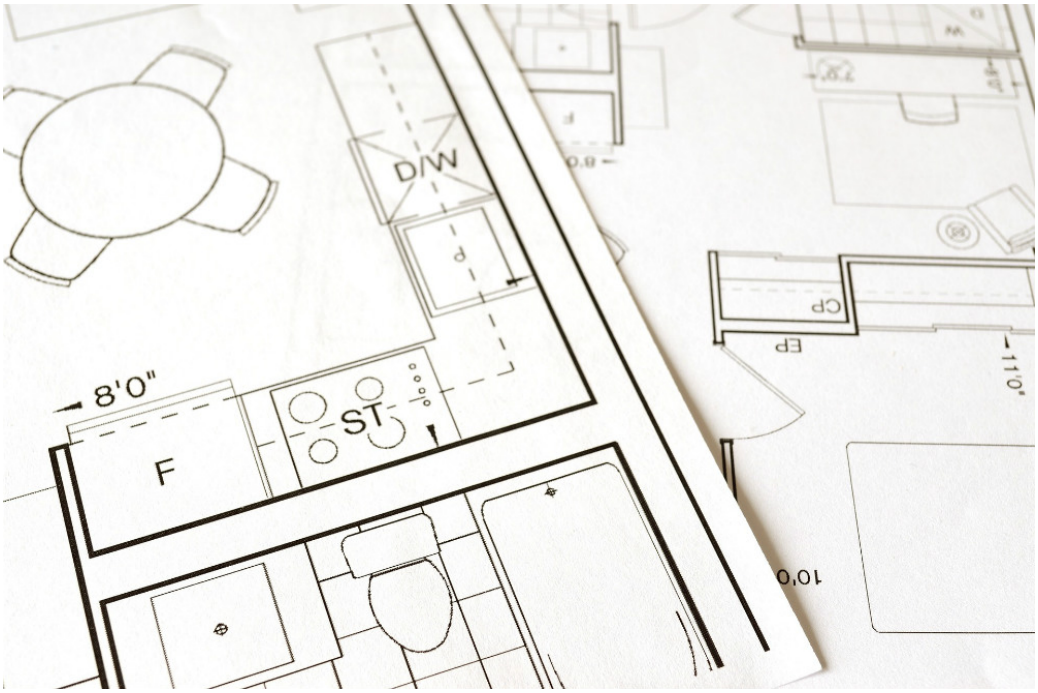
The level to which you engage someone to help you out is entirely up to you. On the higher end you may pay someone to draw your plans and make all your selections (i.e tiles, plumbing fittings, joinery paint etc).

Or on the lower end, it may just be a simple sketch of the room and the rest is up to you.

If you decide to go for option 1 there are a number of sites where you can find a professional depending on what part of the world you are from.

Below are some examples of a few links that may help.

- Australia – Home Improvement Pages
- United States – Thumbtack
- UK – Rated People



OPTION 2: DRAW YOUR OWN BATHROOM FLOOR PLANS WITH AN ONLINE SOFTWARE PACKAGE

There are certainly a tonne of different software packages out there that you could use. Some of them are great – but others are, well... crap! Here are my top picks.

EDRAW

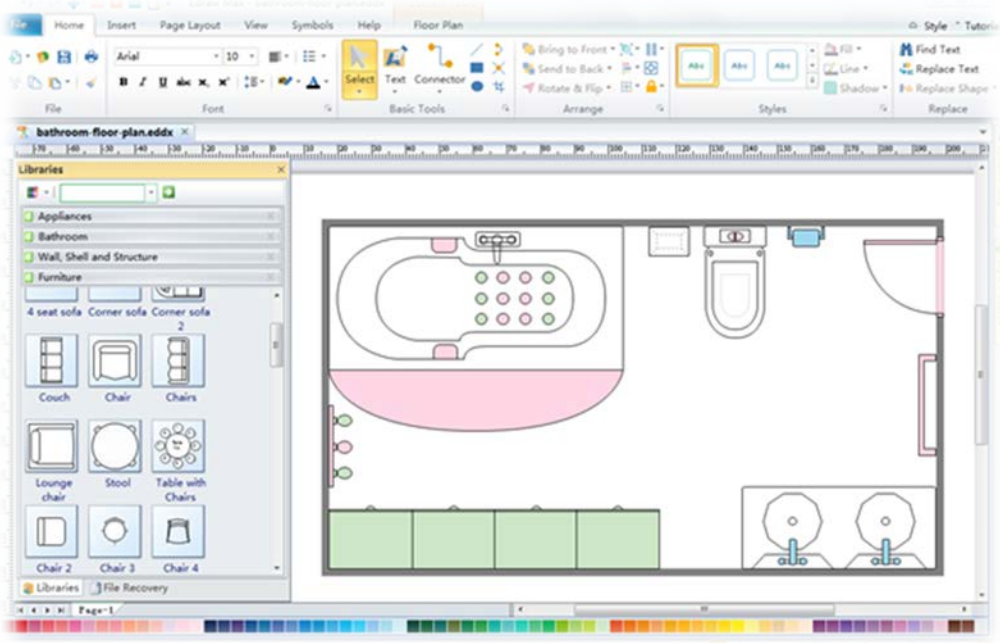
- The easiest online platform to use when you have no experience at all. It features drag and drop icons that can be used in your bathroom layout.
- Includes free and paid versions.
- Check out: edrawsoft.com/template-simple-bathroom-design.
- If you want to see how it all works have a peek at this tutorial: edrawsoft.com/floor-plan-tutorial

SMART DRAW

- Similar to Edraw but a little harder to navigate around the program.
- Includes a 7day free trial, then paid only. Check out: smartdraw.com
- Here are some samples: smartdraw.com/bathroom-plan/examples

SKETCH UP

- A very powerful 3D modelling program.
- Can come in handy to draw details if 3D visualisation is needed.
- Note: This program has a big learning curve and will take a lot of study to go through the video tutorials and learn. Certainly not recommended for the beginner.
- There are free and paid versions. Check out: sketchup.com



OPTION 3 – DRAW YOUR OWN PLANS BY SKETCHING OUT A SCALE DIAGRAM ON PAPER, AND THEN SCANNING AND SAVING

This option is the most 'hands-on'! Depending on how you're going to use it, you can be as precise or as rough as need be.

If you're going to be doing most of the work yourself then you'll want to be as bang on with measurements as possible. On the other hand, if you'll be using a project manager/builder to do it for you – then a rough sketch is ok.

It's important to be accurate with all your measurements, so your bathroom floor plans match what you plan on building on site. For example, lengths and heights of walls, where vanities and basins will be positioned, taps, cabinets, light fittings, towel rails, toilets etc. all need to be carefully positioned and marked down on plan.

Keep in mind, the reason you're scanning and saving your bathroom floor plans is so they can be emailed and reprinted. Don't just make one copy!

IMPORTANT TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN DRAFTING YOUR PLANS WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE 3 OPTIONS

If you decide to go with Option 2 or 3 then you'll need to make sure you include the following in your bathroom floor plans:

- Plumbing layout for all services to be shown including heights of taps, mixers and spouts.
- Electrical layout to be shown for all light points including LED strip lighting, downlights, pendant fittings, exhaust fans, light switching points, power points, heated towel racks and under floor heating including thermostat locations.
- Tiling layout to be considered: will there be a step down in the shower, if so mark it on the plan? Will there be any feature walls? If so mark them on the plan as well. Is there a particular pattern you would like the tiles laid, i.e. brick pattern, diagonal? Where should cut tiles be placed, at the doorway, bath or other location? Thinking about the set out of tiles is important.

The above are just a few things to consider when drafting bathroom floor plans. Once you're happy with the proposed plans it's time to move onto the next part of Stage 2: Planning – the renovation project plan and creating a Job Folder filing system.

2. GETTING ORGANIZED WITH A RENOVATION PROJECT PLAN

As with any home improvement job, you really should have a renovation project plan before you get started. It's a bit like a recipe – you can't bake a cake without knowing the ingredients!

RENOVATION PROJECT PLAN: GATHER & FILE

This stage of the project might seem boring, but creating a good filing system where you can keep all your information stored is critical to staying organized.

This really is a simple two-step process.

STEP 1: GATHER THE INFORMATION

So the first thing to do is look at the different types of information you'll need to gather to undertake all the bathroom renovation jobs.

This information will come from a variety of places and include for example:

- Research – ideas, products, suppliers, contractors etc.
- Bathroom renovation plans
- Local council/State regulator regulations & approvals
- Contractor agreements & contact details
- Budget
- Construction schedule
- Supplies – types of products you'll need to finish the renovation

This list is by no means complete but it gives you some idea of how broad the info gathering process is and why you need a renovation project plan.

STEP 2: ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION

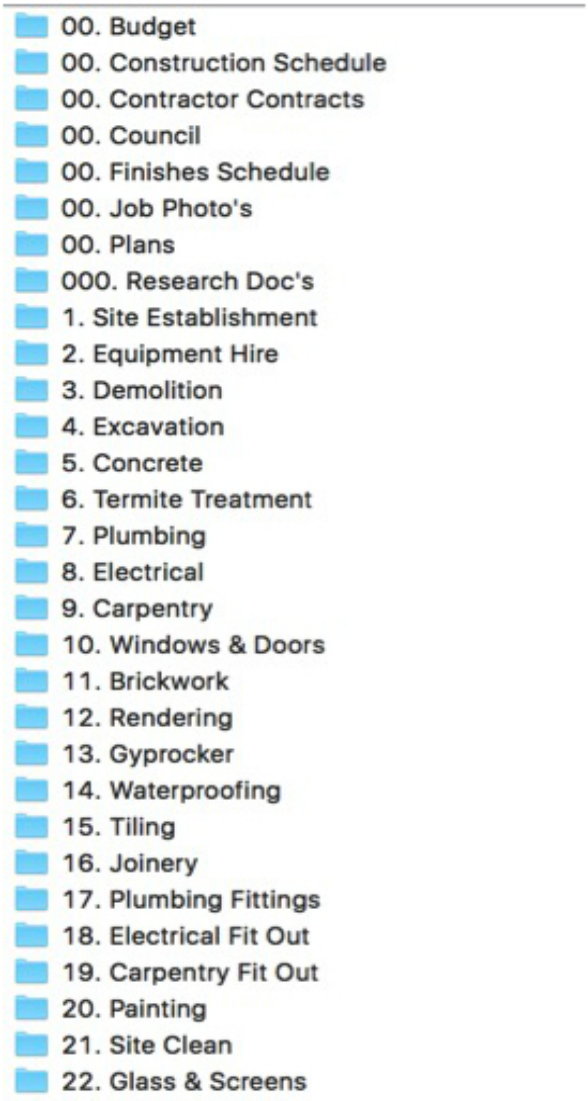
Pretty soon you'll start to see all the info piling up so you'll need to organise it so you can find it later on. Going back to the good old-fashioned 'filing cabinet' approach, start by setting up some key folders – electronic or paper (I suggest both).

Try setting this up before you start gathering the info. That way you won't have to backtrack and waste time re-filing or tracking down loose bits.

WHAT IS A JOB FILING SYSTEM?

A Job Filing system is simply a series of folders for all the items you may use in your renovation that can be accessed with the click of a button. An example of this is below - let's call it "Bathroom Renovation 101".

Create a folder on your computer that is easy to access and name it what you want (i.e. Bathroom Renovation 101), then you will need to create all the subfolders inside of the project folder like the ones below:



Here is a download link to populate these folders on your computer and save some typing – Bathroom Renovation Job File Structure Folders

Now you may not need all these subcategories for your renovation, but it's a pretty good example of all the things you may need to cover when doing a full-blown bathroom renovation.

The idea of having all these folders is so that you can save all your information in relation to your project into these folders as you go, and be

able to have that info at your fingertips in an organized manner when you need to re visit it.

Some of the folders I will go on to discuss in more detail when we cover those topics (i.e. Construction Schedule & Finishes Schedule), but most are self-explanatory.

STAY ORGANIZED AND STAY IN CONTROL

So this stage is pretty simple, but do it right and get organized upfront before starting. It'll help you to stay on track and on top of things.

You'd be surprised at the number of stressed out people renovating – so don't become one yourself!

That's it for the second part of Stage 2: Planning – renovation project plan & the Job Filing System. Let's move onto our Selections / Finishes Stage.

3. BATHROOM FINISHES: DOCUMENTING YOUR SELECTION'S PROCESS

A key part of the planning stage is deciding on what bathroom finishes you want in your redesigned space. *The* selections process is one of the most important parts *of any renovation or remodelling project* and will require a big effort and focus on your part to get it 100% completed.

At first, it might seem like a lot of fun picking out taps and tiles, but after awhile it can become quite overwhelming. However, it really doesn't have to be a daunting task.

By using a tried and tested selection process you'll be able to take control of the situation and save yourself a lot of money and headaches as well.

BATHROOM FINISHES: WHAT IS THE SELECTIONS PROCESS?

It's the system I use for selecting all of the products, materials, and various items that will be used in putting together a renovation project (bathroom, kitchen, extension etc.)

In my opinion, this is one of the most important steps in getting organised and setting yourself up for success.

The list of bathroom finishes you'll need will be driven by the scale and size of your bathroom renovation. However, there are some fairly basic finishes every bathroom should have (give or take a few).

TYPES OF FINISHES FOR A BATHROOM RENOVATION PROJECT

Below I have outlined some examples of the items you may need to select or at least have some input when dealing with building professionals.

- Flooring – ceramic; tile; stone; wood; carpet
- Countertops – granite/marble; solid surface; laminate; tile; wood
- Cabinets – decide on how much storage you need upfront before choosing
- Bath Fixtures – toilet; sink; shower (head/screen); bathtub; taps
- Splashbacks – sink; shower; bathtub areas
- Waterproofing – walls; floors; ceiling
- Lighting – vanity cabinet; ceiling; electrical sockets; energy efficient
- Doors/Windows – skirtings; architraves; door handles & fittings
- Specialty Features – heated flooring; bidet

4 KEY THINGS YOU SHOULD DO

1. VISIT SHOWROOMS

As you choose your fixtures and materials, visit speciality design showrooms for plumbing, lighting, flooring, cabinets, etc.

You'll get a real feel for what's available on the market, and you can talk to the professionals who work there about your ideas and what products will achieve your goals.

The best way to do this is to block out a weekend where you can visit showrooms and decide on all your choices.

Rule number 1 – if you have kids either organize a babysitter or bring a lot of chocolate and an iPad to keep them entertained. But if your kids are anything like mine you have been warned!

2. MAKE ALL YOUR SELECTIONS BEFORE THE WORK COMMENCES

I always advise anyone tackling a renovation project to ensure that all the selections are done upfront before starting on site.

3. HAVE ALL MATERIALS ON SITE BEFORE THE CONSTRUCTION STARTS

This helps to cut down on potential delays in the construction schedule – which ends up hurting your wallet.

4. FOCUS ON ONE SEGMENT AT A TIME

Now you may need more than one weekend but I suggest you focus on one segment at a time, and then move onto the next i.e. plumbing fittings, then electrical fittings, then tiles, paint etc.

If you are still finding it all a bit overwhelming you can always hire an interior designer to help you select all the bathroom finishes for you. For more info on this, check out our blog post at: renovationjunkies.com.au/selections-process

So we've completed the third part of Stage 2: Planning – bathroom finishes and the selections process. Now I'm going to briefly touch on costing and budgeting.

4. KNOW YOUR NUMBERS WITH A BATHROOM REMODEL COST CALCULATOR

By using a bathroom remodel cost calculator you'll not only save your wallet (and possibly your marriage), but you'll ensure the finished space is something you can be proud of. Keeping on top of your renovation budget is crucial! I can't emphasise it enough!!

I'm not going to go into the in's and out's of how to budget as labour rates and costs of renovating vary to much from city to country, and change from year to year. So I'll focus instead on where to get hold of an online cost calculator.

MAKE BUDGETING EASIER WITH A BATHROOM REMODEL COST CALCULATOR

There are a quite a few online calculators that can help you with this. Just Google 'bathroom remodel cost calculator' or go to RemodelingCalculator.org (USA) and TheMakeoverGroup.com.au (Australia).

Some of the major costs to plan for include:

- Plumbing – moving plumbing or installing new elements
- Tiling – floor and wall tiles
- Shower screen – frameless, semi-frameless or standard shower screen
- Bath – integrated or freestanding
- Toilet – standard or in-wall cistern
- Vanity – standard or wall mounted
- Lighting – task, general or mood
- Waterproofing – to make sure your bathroom doesn't spring a leak

I have also written a few other blog posts about how much an average bathroom renovation costs in a number of countries. Check them out here:

- How Much Does It Cost To Remodel A Bathroom (Australia)
- What Does It Cost To Renovate A Bathroom (comparing Australia, UK, USA)

A word of caution: if something is going to go wrong, it will. So always leave room in your budget for any issues that may crop up.

So we've completed the last part of Stage 2: Planning – budgeting using a bathroom remodel cost calculator.

We've now hit Stage 3: Pre Construction Stage – where we look at project timelines/construction schedules and the types of tradies/contractors you'll need for each job.

STAGE 3: PRE CONSTRUCTION

1. HOW DO I FIND THE BEST BUILDING CONTRACTORS?

There are many ways to find good quality building contractors such as by word of mouth referrals (i.e. family, friends, workmates etc.), local papers, Googling online, and much more.

But the way I suggest you do it (especially if you're new to it all) is to use a trusted online service such as the ones listed below.

KEEPING TRACK OF BUILDING CONTRACTORS DETAILS

Before you do that, the first step is to create or use a template to capture all of the contractors contact details in one location. Having everyone's information in one place will make it easier to find when you need to call or email them.

I've created a free Master Contractors template for you (the same one I've used in my building business) that you can download here.

Now onto the big question of how to find a contractor, I recommend you try these services below:

- Australia – Home Improvement Pages
- US – Thumbtack
- UK – Rated People

Click here for a video demonstrating how to use these online services as well as running you through the Master Contractors template.

SIGNING CONTRACTS: WHAT'S THE PROCESS?

So when do you need to be talking with building contractors and obtaining quotations?

I'd suggest a minimum of two months before you plan on starting, or more if you can manage it.

Most good contractors will have at least a few months' worth of work in front of them, and it will generally take a few weeks before they come back to you with a quotation.

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND

1) Try and ***obtain 3 quotes*** so that you can compare your contractors on price but also on responsiveness.
2) During the quotation stages if they are hard to contact, don't return calls and take a lot of chasing up for the quote – then I would be wary of using them, as it's probably how they will conduct themselves during your renovation.

3) Don't be afraid to chase them up during the quoting stage. Sometimes a few extra reminders that you're waiting on their price will keep you at the forefront of their mind.

4) Remember – most building contractors are generally on the tools during the day and do their quoting either at nights or on the weekends. The old phrase, "*the squeaky wheel gets the oil*", so don't be afraid to follow up with them – but two reminders in my books is enough! After that, look elsewhere as they are probably not interested enough in the project.

GETTING IT DOWN ON PAPER

Once you have decided on a contractor and are happy with their price it's time get an agreement down on paper.

Depending on what state or country you live in every governing authority will have different rules and regulations about what type of work licensed building contractors can carry out, and the dollar value associated with it.

Below, I go through the process exactly the way I would since I live in the state of NSW in Australia.

OVER $5,000 AUD

Any work conducted over the value of $5,000 should have a small works contract in place.

These basically show the agreed price of the work, the building contractors details such as licences and insurances, the owner's details and a place where both parties can sign off on the document.

This form can be downloaded here.

UNDER $5,000 AUD

If the works are under the value of $5,000 I still advise to have some sort of agreement in writing.

This should include: the price, building contractors details, anticipated start and completion dates, and any other terms and conditions you might like included such as building contractor is responsible for cleaning up their own rubbish, who will be supplying materials, will there be any damages occurred if the project is not completed in time (i.e. $100 off their price every day they are over the agreed finish date) etc, etc.

You're welcome to download the Work Order Document that I use for yourself. ***Please Note***: this document is not classed as legal advice, and I suggest you seek your own before entering into any agreements you may be unsure of.

TOP 8 BUILDING CONTRACTORS TO HIRE FOR BATHROOM RENOVATIONS

Below is a quick list of which contractors (aka 'tradies' if you live in Australia) you'll need for each part of the bathroom renovation process.

BUILDER

Will help you do everything from start to finish but they tend to be on the expensive side as they literally manage the whole process. If you don't mind running around and doing some of the work yourself then you can quickly save a fair chunk of money.

But if you'd rather not get your hands dirty and have the cash to burn, then hiring a builder is your best bet, as they'll manage everything for you.

ARCHITECT

Helps you design the plans and layout for your bathroom, and to make sure that everything fits into the space you have.

CARPENTER

Helps build the cabinets and storage space in the bathroom, making it look as professional as possible.

ELECTRICIAN

Handles everything from the lighting and power to heating and ventilation.

PAINTERS

Helps you get the place looking wonderful when you are finished with the building and design work.

PLUMBERS

Handles anything that involves water, making sure that bathroom fixtures, bath, shower and toilet are all working and flowing smoothly.

TILERS

This is a vital part of the process. They help you make sure that everything from drain management to overall quality of design is just right.

WATERPROOFER

Makes sure that the place stays nice and dry after you go for a shower, for example.

Ok so we've covered how to find building contractors, the quotations process, signing contracts, and also the type of contractors you'll need to hire for your bathroom renovation. The next part of Stage 3: Pre Construction Stage is where we discuss setting up a construction schedule template (or project planner).

2. PLANNING A PROJECT TIMELINE WITH A CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

Using a construction schedule template to plan out your project timeline is a great way to save time.

There's no doubt about it, lining up all your key contractors and resources is one of the most important things you can do on a renovation project. It might seem daunting if you're not a seasoned professional, but with a little guidance, you'll be on top of things in no time.

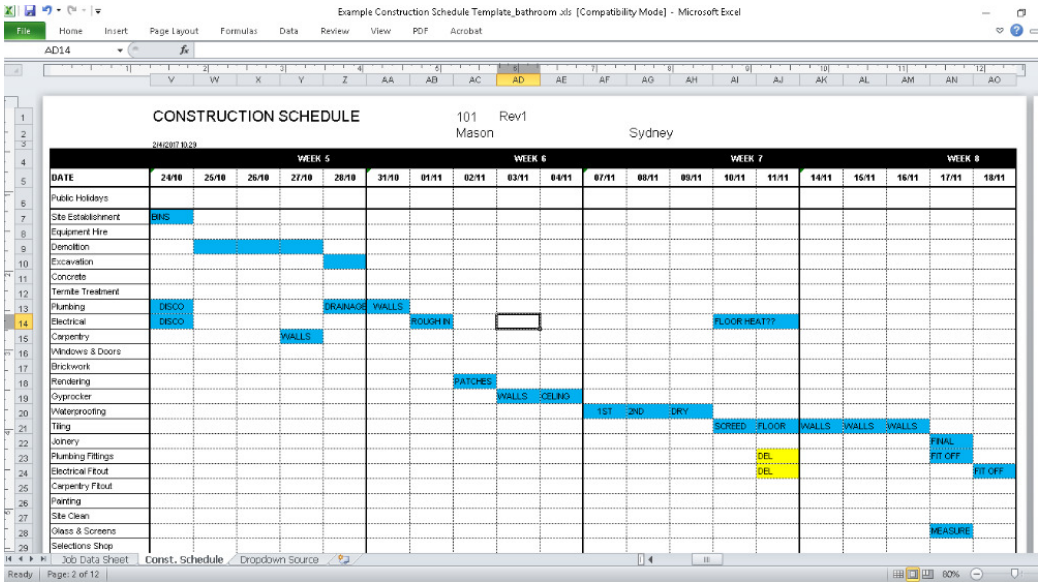
The construction schedule template will help you to get down the scheduling basics. Then you can adjust the details according to discussions with each one of your chosen building contractors.

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE TEMPLATE: 3 REASONS TO USE ONE

Having a construction schedule template is:

- Another way to help project manage your renovation and plan out all the critical tasks one by one without clashes or overlap. Great for helping you think about each stage and what you'll need to have organised when your tradies arrive on site.
- Great for helping you think about each stage and what you'll need to have organised when your tradies arrive on site.
- Will show you the order in which most bathroom renovations will be sequenced, and this is how I would suggest going through and finding your building contractors one by one as you work down your list.

Below is an example of what a construction schedule template looks like (note: if you've enrolled in the *How To Renovate A Bathroom* course, all these templates are included).



And here's a video that demonstrates how to use one.

Some of the considerations when filling out your schedule for each stage of the project are as follows.

1. SITE ESTABLISHMENT

This is the stage where you should get the project set up BEFORE any contractors arrive on site. It covers things such as:

- Installing floor protection over carpets and timber floors
- Setting up skip bins for rubbish removal
- Setting up a first aid kit
- Any signage that may be needed to direct contractors
- Setting up all safety equipment on site (gloves, dust masks, glasses, etc)
- Setting up any temporary toilets if the bathroom will be out of action

During site establishment, I also book in my plumber and electrician. This is to make the work area safe. It's also to perform disconnections for things such as water, gas and power so that the area is ready for demolition.

2. DISCUSS TIMEFRAMES WITH THE CONTRACTORS

For all other items in your construction schedule template, I recommend discussing the timeframe to complete the works with the contractors.

When you engage them in the process, that way you are working within timeframes that they advise they can complete them in. So there are no unrealistic expectations from either party.

3. AVOID SCHEDULING CLASHES

One of the main considerations is trying to avoid a clash in your schedule where two or more contractors need to work in the bathroom at the same time.

Bathrooms are generally confined spaces, and having guys working over the top of each other can be a recipe for disaster.

Depending on the scale and size of your project, you could have a plumber come in the morning and electrician after lunch. But generally speaking, I like to book them on separate days to avoid any headaches.

4. KEEP YOUR SCHEDULE UP-TO-DATE

Another consideration is to keep your schedule current. If there are any changes such as delays or over runs with a particular section of your renovation, make sure you revise your schedule to reflect this.

Once amended make sure you contact your preceding trades and advise them of any delay well in advance so they can reschedule to fit you in at a later date. Calling a contractor one or two days before they were due to start won't cut it!

Most good contractors will have a few months' worth of work in front of them so it may take some shuffling on their part to fit you back in.

Finally, when you're happy with your construction schedule, give every contractor plenty of notice on the start dates. Then book it all in and get ready to watch the magic happen!

That's about it for now. I hope you can see the benefit of using this type of template to schedule in your construction work.

If you have been following and completing all the steps and advice along the way you are now ready to jump into Stage 4: Construction Stage of your project!

STAGE 4: CONSTRUCTION

1. USE A SITE ESTABLISHMENT CHECKLIST BEFORE STARTING CONSTRUCTION

Before starting any construction work, it's vitally important that you have a site establishment checklist on hand.

It's there to help you prepare the building site so the renovation process can begin.

WHAT IS A SITE ESTABLISHMENT CHECKLIST?

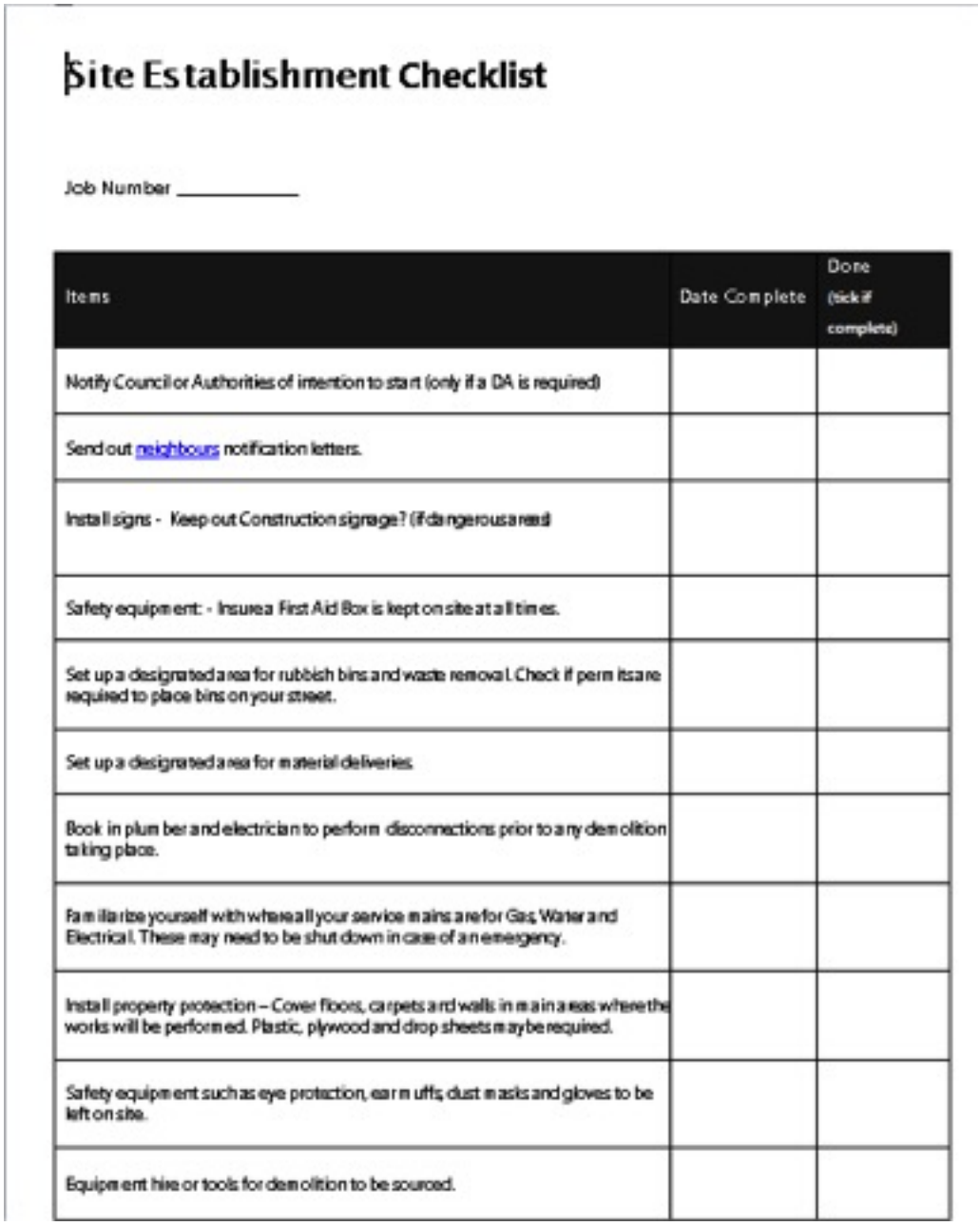
Site establishment includes things like:

- Protection to floors and existing surfaces.
- Safety signs and first aid equipment.
- Designated areas for material deliveries and rubbish etc.

It's during this stage (or day on site) that you will also need to locate all of your mains services like water supply, gas and electricity.

- Know where they're located in case of an emergency.
- Don't scramble around trying to find a buried water meter at the last minute.

Below is an example of a checklist that I use for site establishment (note: if you've enrolled in the *How To Renovate A Bathroom* video course, all these templates are included).



Site Establishment Checklist

Job Number _____

Items	Date Complete	Done (tick if complete)
Notify Council or Authorities of intention to start (only if a DA is required)		
Send out neighbours notification letters.		
Install signs - Keep out Construction signage? (if dangerous area)		
Safety equipment: - Insure a First Aid Box is kept on site at all times.		
Set up a designated area for rubbish bins and waste removal. Check if permits are required to place bins on your street.		
Set up a designated area for material deliveries.		
Book in plumber and electrician to perform disconnections prior to any demolition taking place.		
Familiarize yourself with where all your service mains are for Gas, Water and Electrical. These may need to be shut down in case of an emergency.		
Install property protection – Cover floors, carpets and walls in main areas where the works will be performed. Plastic, plywood and drop sheets may be required.		
Safety equipment such as eye protection, ear muffs, dust masks and gloves to be left on site.		
Equipment hire or tools for demolition to be sourced.		

KEEP THE NEIGHBOURS INFORMED!

This is also the time you'll want to let your neighbours know when you intend to start with your renovation.

- A letter dropped into the mailbox of your surrounding neighbours is all you need.
- Let them know to expect a little noise and dust for a few weeks.

- Give them a heads up if parking will be an issue due to tradesmen trucks and deliveries.

Here's an example of a standard template letter that you could use.

Saturday, 4 February 2017

Dear Sir / Madam / friendly neighbour,

This is a courtesy letter to advise you of building and construction work commencing at [redacted]. The hours of construction work will be between 7am to 4.30pm. We will aim to keep noise levels to a minimum during these hours.

Please note that while works are being carried out on our renovation there may be extra vehicles for tradesman and contractors in the street, we apologise in advance for any problems this may cause.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on ..... And feel free to check out our amazing renovation when its all finished!

Kind Regards, Your friendly neighbour.

By doing this upfront you can save yourself a lot of headache by not surprising your neighbours with it. And remember that you have to live with these guys longer than the duration of your renovation project, so be mindful.

HOW TO PERFORM SITE ESTABLISHMENT

Site establishment can be anywhere from a couple of hours to take care of a few basics, through to a couple of days for larger projects.

Below are some of the typical site establishment checklist items for a bathroom renovation.

SITE ESTABLISHMENT CHECKLIST

1) NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION LETTERS

- Inform your neighbours of intended start date and site contact numbers.
- Do this at least 2 weeks prior to starting on site.

2) FIRST AID EQUIPMENT

- To be stored on site in a prominent location.
- Include for any site inductions with new contractors on site.

3) SITE AMENITIES

- Including toilets, running water, site sheds, tool lock ups, lunchrooms, etc.

4) PERMITS

- May need to be obtained from local authorities for project specific items i.e. skip bins, work zones or traffic control items.

5) TRAFFIC CONTROL

- Needs to be considered for organizing deliveries and managing pedestrians.

6) PLUMBING AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES

- Need to be disconnected to work zones prior to construction.
- Temporary utilities may need to be installed for the duration of the build.

7) SIGNAGE

- Builders contact details.
- Private certifiers (if you have one) contact details.
- Relevant warning signs.
- Location of site office signs or any safety and induction signs to be erected on the site fence or in a prominent location.

8) DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG SERVICES

- Is required before arriving on site.
- This ensures that any authorities services or mains will not be damaged during construction.

9) INSURANCES

- To cover the type of work being undertaken during construction.
- Homeowners household insurances may need to be varied or amended during the course of the building works.

- Includes insurances like:
    - Public liability.
    - Workers compensation.
    - Construction all risk.
    - Homeowners warranty.

10) CHECK APPROVED DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

- Ensure your DA is installed or considered at the time of the site establishment being carried out.

As I mentioned before, every bathroom renovation project is different so you'll need to do some research well in advance to see what requirements need to be in place. By using a site establishment checklist you'll ensure that all bases are covered.

The one thing I can't stress enough though is to plan ahead and have everything ready for day one.

You don't want be putting these measures in place during the project as it could be unsafe for anyone on site. You could also potentially risk heavy fines from authorities is you're found not to be compliant with the requirements in your DA.

Once you have established the site you are ready to jump into the demolition process of Stage 4: Construction!

CONSTRUCTION TIPS

A) BATHROOM DEMOLITION TIPS

When it comes to the bathroom demolition stage, it's a good idea to have a plan of action before you get started!

HOW TO DO A BATHROOM DEMOLITION PROPERLY

1. TURN OFF YOUR WATER & ELECTRICITY

Always have your services capped off and made safe prior to any demolition by your plumber and electrician.

If you don't feel confident in removing any items such as basins, baths, taps, toilets, light fittings and power points – then you can ask the professionals to remove them while they are making the area safe for demolition.

Familiarize yourself where all your service meters are located for your electrical meter, water meter and gas. Even after your contractors have been out to make the area safe before demolition there can still be a pipe buried in the wall that may get damaged during the bathroom demolition.

The last thing you want is to have water flooding your house and you cannot locate a water meter that might be buried in a garden!

2. CHECK WHAT'S BEHIND THE WALL

Another consideration is what is behind your tiles, if you have a hollow wall (timber frame with wall sheeting), there could be a possibility that asbestos sheeting may have been used.

Depending on the age of your house, if this is a concern then an occupational hygienist can be engaged to test the materials and let you know before you start work.

Here is an example of a company here is Sydney that can perform such an inspection – https://www.airsafe.net.au/. You can always find similar professionals in your home town and country.

3. INSPECT WHAT LIES BELOW THE SURFACE

With all renovation / demolition projects it can be hard to determine what lies below the surface, and sometimes the full extent of any damage or repairs needed may not be known until things are ripped apart.

For example in some old bathrooms waterproofing is non-existent and water damage over many years may result in a rotten timber floor below your tiles that may need replacing. Termites also come and go, and pulling linings off walls can often expose paper thin timber framed structural walls.

4. HAVE A CASH CONTINGENCY PLAN

In most cases I would recommend having a 10-15% variation contingency up your sleeve for costs that might be unknown.

A few extra grand on a 20K bathroom might be all you need to be safe, but its recommended to have a little buffer for those hidden surprises.

5. BATHROOM DEMOLITION TOOLS

If you plan on tackling the demolition yourself, here is a list of tools and equipment you may need.

- Power Saw – http://amzn.to/1OsfHdq

- Angle grinder – http://amzn.to/1Cq2pXn
- Impact Driver – http://amzn.to/1jITsE0
- Plaster Saw – http://amzn.to/1TeVM3V
- Utility Knife – http://amzn.to/1SaFrwe
- Hammer – http://amzn.to/1QXfwbf
- Brick Bolster – http://amzn.to/1wy08mM
- Tape Measure – http://amzn.to/1NIY2sY
- Demolition Hammer – http://amzn.to/1HZ4dat
- Wrecking bars – http://amzn.to/1zCoKRf
- Safety Glasses – http://amzn.to/1HdNIbR
- Construction Gloves – http://amzn.to/1xv3xa6
- Ear Muffs – http://amzn.to/1A8QFY9
- Wheel Barrow – http://amzn.to/14739on
- Shovels – http://amzn.to/1xYdLT7
- Ladders – http://amzn.to/13EEvey
- Drop Sheets – http://amzn.to/1QXfhNB

Now with these recommended tools, you need to ask yourself if I already own many of these tools? If not, what would it cost me to purchase or hire them for a few days or a week?

If the costs start adding up it may actually be cheaper to hire a demolition contractor or carpenter to come in and do your demolition and strip out of the bathroom for you.

Demolition can be a rewarding task when you get to pull out that ugly bath that you've had to put up with for years! But it can also be dangerous, so make sure you have fun but play it safe!

Now lets move on to Stage 4: Construction – carpentry.

B) BATHROOM CARPENTRY TIPS

Here I outline some handy carpentry tips and advice to cover both structural elements and final fit offs.

CARPENTRY TIPS FOR A BATHROOM RENOVATION

The carpentry stage in a bathroom renovation will usually come before the installation of services. For example if a partition wall is required to be built that will have new services running through it.

Some bathrooms may comprise of a simple strip out and re installation of services, so your carpentry tasks will probably only be minor. While other bathrooms can be more complex and require the skills of a carpenter in more stages throughout your renovation.

1. WHAT JOBS WILL A CARPENTER DO?

Some of the tasks that a carpenter can undertake on a bathroom renovation are as follows, but not limited to:

- The actual demolition of your existing bathroom.
- Installation of partition walls or new wall framing.
- Relocation of doorways and window.
- Subfloor replacement of concrete or new fibros cement sheeting.
- Replacement of rotten or damaged timbers.
- New structural elements (if required).
- New window and door installations.
- Blocking out (framing) for toilet roll holders and other wall fixtures.
- Installation of new cabinetry.
- Fittings such as towel rails, mirrors etc.

So you can see from the above that a carpenter can play a pretty big part in your bathroom renovation.

2. WHERE WILL YOUR FIXTURES GO?

One major tip to consider if you have timber framed walls when renovating your bathroom, is the location of any fixtures that need to be mounted i.e. towel rails, toilet roll holders etc.

If you can mark the locations of these on plan then a carpenter can install timber blocking between the studs so that solid fixing can be achieved. We have all seen the results of poor fixings into a hollow wall.

Once your carpenter has done his part in the early stages they'll usually be back at the fit off stage.

3. DISCUSS PLANS WITH YOUR CARPENTER

It's important to run through the plans and put a scope together with your carpenter at the initial quoting stages. That way you can make sure that everything you would like them to do is covered in there quote.

CARPENTRY FIT OFF

This is the stage of the project where your carpenter will come back and fit off items such as:

- Towel rails.
- Toilet roll holders.
- Vanity cabinets.
- Install doors.
- Door locks and door furniture.
- Window locks.
- Robe hooks.
- Mirrors shaving cabinets.
- And much more - depending on the scope of the renovation.

If you are handy on a hammer drill you may be able to save yourself a few dollars by installing some of your own fittings.

Just be aware that it can be quite easy to scratch or chip a tile if you don't know what you're doing.

Here are a few videos covering some more carpentry tips that may help if you want to have a crack yourself.

1. HOW TO DRILL THROUGH CERAMIC TILES WITHOUT SCRATCHING THEM

https://youtu.be/1jkA5Zr6NNs

2. HOW TO INSTALL A HOTWIRE HEATED TOWEL RACK

https://youtu.be/cQvETIyCpIE

Now if you have a door that needs replacing and you are feeling adventurous you may also want to try and install one yourself. But I will advise that this is one of the trickiest things to master as a carpenter, and you'll require a few specialist tools for the job.

That said if you would like to try your hand at it here is another full tutorial on how to go about it.

3. HOW TO INSTALL AN INTERNAL DOOR (PLUS LOCK) – COMPLETE BEGINNERS GUIDE

https://youtu.be/OV9EC-RR6Ac

So that about covers it for my carpentry tips. Now it's time to bring in your plumber and electrician for Stage 4: Construction – the installation of new bathroom services.

C) TIPS FOR INSTALLING BATHROOM SERVICES

Now it's time to look at installing the right bathroom services based on your renovation design plans.

TIPS FOR INSTALLING NEW BATHROOM SERVICES

This is the stage of your project when the plumber and electrician will come in to either install new services, or modify the existing services to suit your new bathroom design.

1. HAVE ALL FITTINGS ONSITE BEFORE WORK STARTS

The biggest tip here when it comes to bathroom services are to make sure you have all plumbing and electrical fittings onsite before starting any of the work.

We touched on this during our planning stage so I won't harp on it too much, but I recommend having all your fittings in a spare room or the garage for when your contractors arrive.

2. KEEP TECHNICAL DATA CLOSE AT HAND

Another tip is to have all technical data for the items available to contractors.

Normally they will be in the box's supplied with the fittings, but in some cases you may need to download this information from the suppliers website, so be prepared for that.

3. PUT UNUSED PARTS BACK IN THEIR BOXES

When the contractors arrive they will generally pull the boxes open to get to any parts the may need at the initial rough in stages of the project.

I recommend making sure that when they are finished all parts (including instructions) that were not used should be placed back into the box. That way the contractors will be able to find everything when they return at a later stage for the fit off.

I have had a few bad experiences myself over the years with missing parts or instructions – so be diligent & keep everything together.

If you are working with a larger company and not an owner operator, sometimes one tradesman may come out to perform the rough in, and when it comes time to the fit off they may send someone else. In that scenario if the box with the part is missing along with any parts or instructions…. Well you get the idea.

4. AVOID SCHEDULING CLASHES WITH CONTRACTORS

Another tip is to avoid having multiple contractors working in your bathroom at same time. We discussed this in Stage 3: Pre Construction when drafting our Construction Schedule for the project. But it's still good to keep this in mind.

Book the plumber on one day, and the electrician the next.

5. GOOD TIME TO THINK OF UPGRADING

With the installation of new bathroom services this could also be a perfect time to look at upgrading that old hot water heater or electrical meter board.

It's worth getting advice from your contractors back in your preliminary planning stages when they are quoting your project. That way you can factor it into your budget.

If you are opting for upgrades to your services, the contractors would either be working on the upgrades at this stage of installation or at the end when they come back to perform the plumbing and electrical fit off.

6. LAMINATE YOUR PLANS

It's also a good idea to have a full set of plans laminated and left on site. That way if any of the contractors forget theirs they have something to work off.

It's critical that all your bathroom services are installed exactly where you want them, so don't be afraid to check the contractor's work or ask questions if something doesn't seem right.

7. TAKE LOTS OF PHOTOS

Lastly, I recommend that you take lots of photos of all the bathroom services in the wall before they are covered up! Then if there are any issues down the track, you'll know where to look, or where to avoid if installing new fixings.

Ok once all services are roughed in, it's time to move onto Stage 4: Construction – wall linings.

D) BATHROOM WALL LINING TIPS

The type of bathroom wall lining (or cladding) you use and its proper installation are important considerations during the renovation process.

Below are some tips to help you along the way.

BATHROOM WALL LINING: WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Depending on your bathroom, your wall linings will usually come under two categories:

1) Drywall linings – plaster board sheeting or cement sheeting.
2) Hardwall plaster – cement render over brickwork, or solid brick walls.

You would have determined what your bathroom is constructed from back in the preliminary stages of the project. So by now you should be fully aware of your wall construction – especially after the demolition and removal of any wall tiles.

1. TIMBER FRAME WALLS

If you have timber frame walls you'll most likely be looking at option 1 above and installing new sheeting.

It's recommended when installing this sheeting that you use a product that is designed for a wet area such as villaboard that is a fibros cement sheet. There are also other wet area boards such as "Aqua check" or green board.

But it's best to consult with a manufactures technical department for the right board for your application.

2. BRICK WALLS

If you have brick walls you will more than likely be going with option 2 – a hardwall plaster.

This means using a cement render to re skim the walls straight and flush to be ready for tiles. I highly recommend using an acrylic render with faster drying times for this type of finish.

Standard sand and cement normally have longer drying times to fully cure. This can effectively delay the installation of your waterproofing membrane if it's not completely dry, or worse cause your membrane to fail.

3. PHOTOS OF ALL YOUR SERVICES

Take plenty of photos of all your services (plumbing and electrical) in the wall, and your room in general before you sheet your walls.

These photos may come in handy for future reference down the track.

With either option this is generally a pretty messy stage of your bathroom renovation. So kindly ask your contractors to stay on top of any mess they make and clean up after themselves.

Once all your bathroom wall linings have been done the next step is to move onto Stage 4: Construction – waterproofing.

E) BATHROOM WATERPROOFING TIPS

Bathroom waterproofing is one of the most critical things you absolutely need to do properly when renovating.

The majority of warranty issues and call backs that occur in most bathrooms are due to waterproofing failure. Below are some of my top tips to help you avoid this.

BATHROOM WATERPROOFING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. WATCH YOUR ANGLES & UPTURNS

A big consideration when it comes to bathroom waterproofing needs to be around the placement of angles or upturns in shower bases and also at doorways.

2. HIRING A BATHROOM WATERPROOFING PROFESSIONAL

There are a lot of waterproofing products on the market, but generally they will be polyurethane or acrylic based materials.

It's important that the right product is used for each individual bathroom. This is where hiring a professional waterproofing contractor really comes in handy. So if in doubt, get someone who knows what they're doing!

In many cases the tiler will install the waterproofing membrane. This is ok if they have been trained to do so and can install it according to the relevant codes.

If the tiler is competent with the installation then you don't need to get two separate trades involved. And as an added bonus, they can also select the correct tile glues to match the waterproofing product that is used.

3. CHOOSE THE RIGHT INSTALLATION METHOD

One important thing to note with bathroom waterproofing is that sometimes there are different installation methods depending on how your existing space is constructed.

For example sometimes the waterproofing membrane will go directly on the floor sub straight (concrete slab or cement sheeting) and have the sand and cement tile bed laid over the top.

Some methods may also include a membrane over the sand and cement bed as well for that extra protection.

Either way it's critical it's done correctly. So I advise you to be over cautious at this stage. And if it means paying more for extra precaution when installing the bathroom waterproofing then it's worth it.

4. MAKE SURE YOUR FLOOR IS LEVEL

A major tip when it comes to the waterproofing on your floor is to ensure that the substrate of your floor is level. Also check that all plumbing puddle flanges (technical term, sorry you may have to Google it) are recessed into the floor so they sit flush.

This way if any water gets through your sand and cement floor screed (we will discuss this in the tiling stage), it will make its way to the membrane and then into your floor wastes with no obstructions.

If you have an existing bathroom floor that is majorly out of level, then I would advise to have a membrane installed over the sand and cement screed bed as well. Then no water will get trapped under the bed in the uneven areas of your floor.

Again it's pretty hard to explain every little detail when it comes to bathroom waterproofing. But I strongly suggest hiring a professional that comes with good references as this is a very critical part of any bathroom renovation.

It may be hard for a waterproofer to quote on your renovation until they have seen the state of your floor after the demolition has been carried out. So you may have to factor in getting them to inspect immediately after your demolition is completed to avoid any delays down the track.

Once your room has been waterproofed you're ready to move onto Stage 4: Construction – tiling.

F) BATHROOM TILING TIPS

There's a lot to cover when it comes to bathroom tiling. But if you're new to renovating some of the technical terms may go over your head.

However, I promise to make it as easy as possible to understand!

BATHROOM TILING: 7 GREAT TIPS

So lets try and cover some of the things you need to know when doing bathroom tiling.

1. THE BEDDING (OR SCREED)

What is a sand and cement bed?

You will often hear this term when it comes to bathroom tiling, and it refers to the material that is placed under the floor tiles.

- It's usually a mixture of 4 parts sand to 1 part cement
- It's mixed up and placed over a bathroom floor in a bedding layer of approx. 30-50mm thick.

The bedding (also known as a screed) will have a fall or gradient from the door way and edges of the bathroom walls, back into the floor wastes to direct any water back into the drainage system.

2. THE FLOOR GRADIENT

Without this gradient there is no place for the water to go.

This is often the reason there is sometimes a large step up (20-40mm) into a bathroom. It's because the bathroom floor and the floor of the main house have been installed at the same level.

If this is the case, it's the 30-40mm tile bed and a 5-8mm tile on top that is causing the step.

The only way to avoid this is to drop the floor down the thickness of the bed and tile in the bathroom area.

New Homes: Easy to Factor in During the Planning Stage

If you are building a new home you can factor it into the plan and have your "wet areas" lowered by 50mm.

Existing Homes: Can't Always be Achieved Without Great Expense

If you have an existing concrete slab there is no way to get a level transition between your bathroom floor and house without having the concrete slab approx. 50mm lower.

In most cases the existing concrete slab would have to be jackhammered out.

This could be a consideration if you concrete was old and substandard, or needed to be removed for new drainage. If that was the case then this would be the perfect opportunity to lower the finished level of the concrete by 50mm.

Timber Floors

The above also applies to timber floors.

The carpenters would have to put in extra time and cost to lower a timber floor.

But again, if the floor was being repaired or replaced you could also take the opportunity to lower the finished level (i.e. top of sheeting) by 50mm.

3. UNDER TILE HEATING

Another consideration is under tile heating.

Each manufacturer of under tile heating may have different installation methods. For example, some companies may install the wire element "under" the screed bed, while others may want the product installed over the screed bed under glued under the tile.

Here is a video of the product we installed over the screed bed on one of our bathrooms.

https://youtu.be/Ma79pbJdPqs

4. SETTING OUT YOUR TILES

Next thing to consider with your bathroom tiling is the set out.

It's rare that you will ever get full tiles to work from corner to corner of a bathroom. There will usually be a cut tile on one wall or the other.

It's critical at the set out stage with you tiler to discuss where these cuts will go and what will look the best. This is especially important when you have a tile with a pattern on it.

5. FINISHING TILES AT THE EDGES

Another consideration is how your tiles will be finished at external corners of walls, window recesses or doorways.

One option is to install a *mitred* edge, i.e. 45% cuts so that they meet on a point. Although not all tiles can be mitred due to the size of the tile, make of material and a few other varying factors.

Another option is *tile trims*. These come in various sizes, colours and materials. A tile trim gives a nice edge for the tile to finish up to and allows for the return tile around a corner to butt up neatly to the same edge.

6. GROUTING

Once wall and floor tiles are installed then grouting is next on the list.

I like to use coloured grouts as they look a little nicer than a standard sand and cement grout mix on the floor. But I use white for the walls. Mid-grey goes pretty well with most coloured tiles too.

And you can't go wrong with a good quality mould resistant grout. It will make the tiles look fresh and clean for longer!

There are also different grout products for the walls and floors.

Generally the floors are more of a course sanded mixture, whilst the walls are a much finer composition. You can also use additives to help prevent mould, but I recommend using the manufactures suggested product if you go this route.

Here is a good video tutorial around grout from Jeff at Home Repair Tutor.

https://youtu.be/SkWqM7QNtNg

7. SILICONE INSTALLATION

One other finishing detail to factor in is silicone installation to all corner junctions of the walls, floor, windows and doors.

It's important to note that the tiler should leave these junctions free from grout so that silicone can be installed as expansion joints. This will prevent unsightly cracking if grout was installed in these areas.

Here is a video demonstrating how to install silicone to these areas.

https://youtu.be/o1ULF0pOolo

Once the bathroom tiling has been done you're then ready to move onto Stage 4: Construction – plumbing & electrical fit off.

G) PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL FIT OFF TIPS

Once all your bathroom tiling is completed then its time for the plumbing & electrical fit off. This is the stage where you start seeing your bathroom really taking shape.

PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL FIT OFF: GET YOUR FITTINGS READY

To be prepared for this stage you'll need to have all you fittings on site ready to go. These include:

- Toilets
- Taps
- Baths
- Basins
- Light fittings
- Exhaust fans
- Heated towel rails
- And all other items for the plumber/electrician

If you' been following along with the 5 Stage process, in particular Stage 2: Planning, you'll already have these. So this is just a reminder to get them ready for when your tradespeople arrive.

1. AVOID SCHEDULING CONFLICTS WITH CONTRACTORS

Like I previously mentioned, its best to avoid having your contractors working over the top of each other.

What I tend to do is book in the electrician one day and the plumber the next day to avoid the chaos of too many people in one small room at a time.

2. USE DROP SHEETS ON TILES

Ask the tradesman to use drop sheets or protection over your freshly tiled floor.

Most decent contractors wouldn't need to be reminded of this – but preventing scratches on the tiles is far better than finding a cure!

3. INSTALL EXHAUST FANS PROPERLY

One important tip is to make sure that any ventilation system that is being installed (i.e. exhaust fan), gets ducted to the exterior of the house and not just up into a ceiling space.

If it's not ducted externally the moisture will build up in your roof cavity and can cause mould and water damage to that area.

4. WARRANTY CARDS & TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Once the tradesmen have completed their installations, check all the boxes that your fixtures came with to make sure that any warranty cards or technical info are still there.

It's a good idea to keet these – preferably saved into your job filing system so that you can call upon the information at a later date if any warranty issues occur.

Now that we've completed the plumbing & electrical fit off, it's time to move onto Stage 4: Construction – painting.

H) PAINTING BATHROOM WALLS

Painting bathroom walls is a fairly straightforward part of the renovation process.

But there are still a few tips worth keeping in mind when undertaking this task.

TIPS FOR PAINTING BATHROOM WALLS

Depending on your design, the painting could take place on items such as ceilings, walls, doors, skirting boards, architraves and windows.

Below are my top 3 bathroom painting tips.

1. MOULD RESISTANT PAINT

My main piece of advice is to choose a good quality mould and bacteria resistant paint.

Bathrooms tend to contain high humidity and moisture levels that can easily lead to mouldy rooms if they are not ventilated correctly.

To avoid this happening, try and have a good mechanical ventilation fan installed.

2. THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

Like all painting, the detail is in the preparation work that is initially done.

The more time and effort you put into puttying holes, patching and sanding any imperfections along with applying good quality undercoats, the better the finished result will be.

3. COVER ALL FIXTURES & FITTINGS

Again it's not rocket science but make sure all fittings, fixtures and tiles are completely covered to prevent any paint getting where it's not supposed to be.

Prevention is better than cure – and you really don't want to spoil your shiny new fixtures!

So that covers painting bathroom walls. Now lets move on to Stage 4: Construction – glass screens.

I) BATHROOM SHOWER SCREENS

When it comes to bathroom shower screens, there's no end of choices to suit every renovation budget & style preference.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING BATHROOM SHOWER SCREENS

Below are four of the most common types of shower screens available.

1) Full framed shower screen.
2) Semi frameless shower screen.
3) Frameless shower screen.
4) Shower rail and curtain.

1. FULLY FRAMED SHOWER SCREENS

These are generally the cheapest of the glass screen options. They primarily consist of a aluminium frame that runs around each piece of glass. i.e. top, bottom, doors and all frames.

Whilst this option may be one of the cheaper ones, it's also considered one of the most watertight (something to consider if you have small children).

This style of screen can also be purchased pre made, online from various stores. And if you're handy, it can also be installed on a budget. Here is an example of an online store that sells this style of screen – Aqua Bathrooms.

Some more examples can be found here.

2. SEMI FRAMELESS SCREENS

Just as it sounds, these styles of screens only have a partial frame – usually on the top and bottom of the glass, with a frameless door.

These look a little more aesthetically pleasing to the eye, and are usually pretty cost effective.

Again this style of screen can be purchased off the shelf (or online) but I generally get these screen custom made by a professional who will also handle the installation.

Here are a few examples.

3. FRAMELESS GLASS SCREENS

This is more your designer style of screen and looks the most visually impressive.

These screens are basically all glass with just a few fixing brackets and hinges. They are also silicone sealed around all joints along the floor and wall.

But with all wow factor fixtures, they come with a price. This style is the most expensive of all the options, and funnily enough is probably the least waterproof due to its design.

Here are some examples for you to see.

4. SHOWER CURTAIN AND RAIL

Other than the glass options, this is your most cost effective screen. That said its also terrible for containing water, so keep that in mind.

As far as installation goes, if your handy with a hammer drill this could also be something that you chose to install yourself and save a few dollars.

Here is an example of how cheap they are on Amazon.

So there you have it! These are the 4 major styles of shower screens available that will cover you from a budget bathroom makeover, to a high-end designer bathroom.

Now lets move on to our last tip in this section, Stage 4: Construction – joinery.

J) BATHROOM JOINERY TIPS

Bathroom joinery (or cabinetry as it's sometimes known) can be classed as things such as vanities, shaving cabinets, and bench tops to name a few.

Below are a few things to keep in mind when choosing these items.

BATHROOM JOINERY: CHEAP VS CUSTOM MADE

Depending on the design of your bathroom, you can opt for custom made bathroom joinery or off the shelf, pre made, or flat packed cabinetry.

Generally speaking something custom made will cost you slightly more than purchasing something already manufactured. But it really comes down to design and budget when choosing between the two.

1. BUDGET MAKEOVER = PRE MADE, OFF THE SHELF

Are you going for a budget makeover or just freshening up of your bathroom? Then a standard pre made or flat pack vanity and mirrored cabinets will get you out of trouble.

Often times a budget of between $200-$300 will suffice for this.

Here are some examples of the type of vanities I am referring to.

If you go for a pre made bathroom joinery unit, then this will generally be something that your carpenter or plumber can install. But I suggest you nominate it on someone's scope of works so that you don't get the carpenter saying it's the plumber's job, and the plumber saying it's the carpenter's!

2. DESIGNER LOOK = CUSTOM MADE

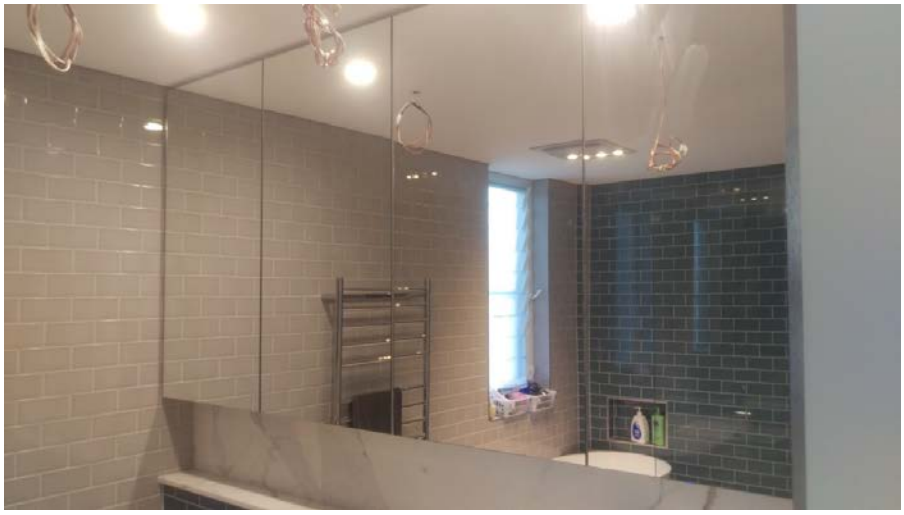
On the other hand, are you going for more of a designer look and require something custom made? Then you could be looking at anywhere from $1000 – $3000 depending on the style and finishes.

Here are a some examples of custom made joinery in bathrooms.

Lead Times: Make Sure You Factor These Into Your Project Timeline

With any custom made joinery, you need to factor in lead times for manufacturing.
Most companies will have between a 4-6 week lead time from deposit to installation. Some more, some less - depending on the finish.

The lead time is something you need to factor in when you're in your early preliminary stages of the renovation project.



CHECK MEASURE: AFTER THE TILING STAGE

Another consideration with custom made joinery is that there is usually a check measure that will be required. This comes after the tiling stages and before they start with their manufacturing.
So if this is what you plan on doing with your bathroom there may be a long manufacturing time. Make sure you also factor this into your planning schedule.

You'll get a gauge of this from the contractors when in the initial quotation stages, but it's worth keeping in mind.

Generally speaking the installation of the joinery is one of the final items to take place. So there may still be some fit off of services needed around part of the joinery. But either way its towards the end of the project.

Last of all, when everything is installed and completed, it's time to give everything a good clean down. That way you'll be ready for those beautiful before and after photos that you can share with your family and friends (and don't forget to share them with us!)

We've come to the final part of Stage 4: Construction. Now we move on to the last step in the renovation process, Stage 5: Project Completion.

STAGE 5: PROJECT COMPLETION

1. COMPLETE BATHROOM RENOVATION

You've gone through a complete bathroom renovation project! Congratulations – you did it!

But before you race off onto another home improvement project, we need to finish some bits and pieces.

In this last step (Stage 5: Project Completion) I sum up some final thoughts & things to consider before signing off.

Complete Bathroom Renovation: Final Tips & Advice

There are a couple of things to consider upon completing you project, and they are – warranties and defects.

1) WARRANTIES

With your warranties I advise you to scan (if you don't already have a digital version) and save all copies of warranties for items that you purchase into your job folder in a separate warranties tab.

By doing this, if you have a faulty tap, toilet or a problem with anything else in your bathroom you can easily locate the paperwork without having to go digging through draws to find lose paper.

If you can find all your warranties in one place there shouldn't be any problem to get the repair work carried out 6-12 months down the track.

2) DEFECTS

With defects, I like to have a three month defects liability period for all my contractors.

If you want to set something like this up I recommend doing it in the initial stages when signing contracts with them.

The way a defects period works is by holding an agreed amount from the contractor's price (i.e. 10%) for a set period of time after they have completed the works (i.e. 3 months).

When the 3 months defects liability period is up you'll then have two options:

1. Get them back for any repairs and final maintenance work that may be required and then release the balance to them.
2. Release the balance if no defects have shown up during that period of time.

Generally a retention of money would usually only be held on larger projects and you may find that a lot of smaller contractors may not be receptive to the process.

It's entirely up to you guys if you chose to go with a method like this. If you do, it's just an extra safe guard to have in place if there are defects and a contractor fails to return. Then at least you will have some money towards paying another contractor to come and rectify any defects.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Last of all, I suggest sitting back with a cold drink and taking in the amazing project you've just created. You've done it – a complete bathroom renovation from start to finish.

If you got through this process successfully you're ready to take on that next project!

How's your kitchen looking?

BTW – Don't forget to share your experiences with the rest of the Renovation Junkies community, we would love to see how you went.

CONTACT US

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