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WHAT'S INSIDE:

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CAN WE MOVE BATHROOM FIXTURES WHEN WE REMODEL?

A bath remodel isn't an easy one-day project. First off, you're dealing with lots of different areas of construction: plumbing, flooring, drywall, countertops, etc. Plus, unlike new construction, you're also working within preexisting conditions and therefore negotiating around older structures while attempting to make them new. In any project there are always going to be a lot of obstacles on the way to completion, but here are some quick improvement ideas to keep in mind as you remodel a bathroom.

Removing Bath Fixtures

First, decide what stays and what goes, and to protect your budget, it's smart to reuse as much as possible. So you may want to replace your tub or sink, but since commodes never go out of style, it's a good idea to keep your toilet around. However, moving bathroom fixtures isn't an easy feat. Like any demo, it gets real messy real quick. For instance, if you've seen a house under construction, you'll notice tubs are installed immediately after the walls are framed but before they're drywalled. In fact, since doors are also added afterwards, you may have to remove jambs to get shower stalls out. And though demo is a necessary evil, it actually requires a lot of care if you're restoring certain items. So you may want to hire a professional for this step. Plus, if you're thinking about several remodels, do them at the same time for efficiency's sake (nobody wants to live in this mess more than once, especially without a shower).

Relocating your Plumbing

When you remodel a bathroom you're likely going to add new bathroom fixtures. And these new items will be bigger and better than the originals. Therefore, any reused installations may have to move over to make room. And typically this involves a toilet: it's an item that stays, it's easy to lift, and it doesn't take up room. Even if you're simply sliding it over, if it's more than two inches it'll require a major plumbing change. It's not the pipes in the wall but the hole underneath that creates a challenge. If you call a plumber, it'll run



about \$500 to move a toilet from its original spot in a wooden subfloor (\$800 if it's set in a concrete slab, which tends to be common on ground floors). But this is still an economic investment: buying a new toilet would add dollars on top of this labor. And if you do it yourself and make a plumbing error, you're going to be in for a lot more work and money as you repair and then renovate around your mistake.

Replacing Old Installations

Now that the old stuff has been removed or restored, you'll want to think about updates. Hopefully the largest portion of your budget can be reserved for this step since it's the most fun but also the most expensive part of the process. For a small bathroom, it's a good idea to replace a cumbersome vanity with a pedestal sink to generate some additional space. But for master bathrooms, you may want to think about a his-and-her sink in order to show off the space you already possess. Next, think about flooring. Carpet and linoleum are pretty standard renovations, but tile has become a trendier fashion statement due to its sharp look and easy maintenance, though it may be cold to the toes in winter. But if you have the money, why not invest in some luxury items: radiant floors to keep things warm or a Jacuzzi to heat up the romance. And don't forget your lighting. Brass items have gone by the wayside, but silver, copper, or plated metal are becoming all the rage. How about wall sconces or a skylight for a more natural look?

As you can see, to remodel a bathroom involves a lot of different areas of construction, from demolition to restoration, repair to reinstallation, plumbing to flooring, drywall to bathroom fixtures. So as with any remodeling project, it's wise to hire a professional contractor who can handle the whole thing in terms of blueprint, design, and construction. Plus, these professionals can even take on the frustrating task of subcontracting other experts to finish any individual, specialty jobs if necessary. •

HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY!

We're celebrating sixty years of serving the community. We would like to pay tribute to John "Pop" Mc Hale Sr., the founding father. We opened our doors in April 1950 and still operate from the same location today. Our current showroom was the home of John & Anna Mae Mc Hale. Our Birthday gift to you, is giving our customers 10% OFF all future service work for the next two years. Sign up for our Customer Loyalty Program for immediate savings. There are no fees or service contracts to sign up. We simply want to thank our customers for their loyalty over the years. We look forward to serving your needs for the next 60 years!



From our family to yours,
Tim McHale

Marc Dickinson has worked in both the general contracting and landscaping trades and is currently a home improvement freelance writer with over 300 articles published.

WHY DOESN'T MY HOT WATER LAST WHEN I SHOWER?



There's nothing worse than getting ready for a nice hot soak only to discover you're in the midst of a cold water shower. If things simply never heat up, it's probably because your water heater has been working overtime and needs time to regenerate. But if your hot water shower turns suddenly chilly, the problem may lay within the unit itself. Here is a quick way to solve any hot water shower troubles.

Water Heater Problems

First, check all your fixtures throughout the house to see if your cold water shower is a singular problem or a whole-house situation. If none of the plumbing allows hot water to pass, then the problem is your hot water heater. Check the temperature control on the unit to see if the setting is ideal. Next, check to see if it's a blown fuse. If you have a gas unit, it could be that the pilot light is blown out, in which case you should relight it following the

manufacturer's instructions. However, if there is still no sign of hot water after the pilot light is re-lit, then you may have a variety of problems: obstruction in the flue, a defective part (often the thermocouple), a faulty temperature control, sediment build up, etc. For any of these more complex replacement projects and repairs, always hire a professional who can diagnose and fix the problem quickly and efficiently.

Hot Water Showers: An Isolated Incident

Once you check out the other fixtures in the home, you may find it's just your bath stall that suffering from sudden cold water showers. Luckily, if it's a newer home, you won't have to worry about replacing the pipes since the possibility of stoppage or obstructions in copper systems are rare. Unlike older homes galvanized steel pipes, copper pipes rarely corrode on the interior, and therefore, other than some oxidation, the piping stays free-flowing. First, find the shut off valve for the hot water and see if it's closed. If so, opening the valve could remedy the situation. But if the water still remains warm for only short periods of time, you may have a problem with your bathroom shower valve.

Remove, Rinse, and Replace

When the rubber parts in the shower valve get worn and distorted from old age, they can swell up and restrict the waterways. This swelling only increases as the water temperature traveling through the valve

increases, and it's not un common for these rubber parts to break off within the mixer valves (this often occurs in two faucet units where the water is separating by differing lines). These stray components can travel into an orifice or port in the mixer and cause an obstruction in the hot water valve. If you are handy, you could disassemble the fixture yourself and clear out the screen on the hot water side (lay a cloth over the drain to reduce the risk of losing small parts for when you have to reassemble the piece later).

Don't Risk It

If you don't trust yourself it's probably for a good reason. Plumbing is a specialty trade and even the simplest project can quickly turn complicated. When it comes to hot water shower problems, the diagnosis is simple but the actual operation is a different story. The body of the shower valve is hidden in the wall and not ready accessible, so care has to be taken in order to avoid more damage to the part. And unlike kitchen or sink faucets, repair and replacement of the shower valve is much more difficult and requires a higher level of skill. Therefore to avoid getting in over your head, call a professional plumber who can properly flush the valve, remove any debris in the lines, lubricate all moving parts, and replace worn components and washers with guaranteed ease. •

Marc Dickinson has worked in both the general contracting and landscaping trades and is currently s home improvement freelance writer with over 300 articles published.

GROUND FAULT INTERRUPTERS KEEP UP THE CODE

In elementary school, we all learned about electrical safety hazards. And we all probably heard the same scenarios: radios falling into bathtubs, blow dryers dropped into sinks, holding a power tool in the rain. However, these stories have come true too many times. This is why in certain areas of the house, especially areas around water, a special outlet called a ground fault interrupter (GFI) is required in order to keep you safe.

What is this thing? You've probably already seen them before. Simply take a look in the bathroom, behind your kitchen sink, in the basement and

garage, or outside around your patio, swimming pool, or hot tub. In these areas where moisture is prevalent, you'll see outlets that contain two color-coded buttons between the plugs. This is a GFI and it is a required safety item that immediately cuts off power when a dangerous ground fault occurs.



How does it all work?

Basically, a ground fault interrupter detects and monitors any change that happens in an outlet. For instance, when you plug in a toaster, a current will flow to the appliance and a current will also flow back to the outlet creating a circuit. There should be a constant rate of exchange between the two, but when change occurs (when a current drops or increases from one side or the other) the GFI will instantly trip and shut off the power exchange.

Why is it important?

They're fast. It only takes an instant to be seriously hurt by electricity. And if your body receives any live current and you happen to be touching the ground (this is called a "ground fault"), you're going to get a big shock. A ground fault interrupter will literally interrupt the ground fault within the outlet. It won't have to travel to a breaker or fuse; instead, these safety outlets cut off power in hundredths of a second to prevent any shock, injury, or fatality. Then after the trip, simply push reset on the outlet to restore power.

How do I get them?

Ground fault interrupters are available at any hardware store. And though they're easy to install, hire a qualified electrician to help you out. They're trained to inspect the entire home to see if you're up to code and can advise about any current safety concerns. Plus, they can properly install the equipment. Electrical work is complicated and dangerous, so when dealing with hazards in the home it's worth the investment.

What do I do?

Perform a monthly inspection. On each outlet, there will be two buttons: one labeled "Test" and the other "Reset." Plug in an appliance or light fixture to see if it works. Then push "Test" and the power should immediately be cut to the appliance. Push "Reset" and power should immediately be restored. However, they do wear out overtime. They can become stressed and trip too often. If this is the case, have them replaced ASAP. •

Marc Dickinson has worked in both the general contracting and landscaping trades and is currently a home improvement freelance writer with over 300 articles published.

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CREATE AN IDEAL KITCHEN

Today's kitchens serve as more than just places to cook up dinner. Modern kitchens are more and more often the home's central gathering place, an area where families socialize and spend time together as much as they actually sit down for meals. Kitchen makeovers are one of the most popular home remodels in the business for just this reason. From cabinetry to countertops, there's an entire world of kitchen design out there to make sure your kitchen makeovers not only update kitchen space in your home, but make your life easier and more enjoyable at the same time.

Kitchen Makeovers: Cabinetry and Countertops

Most kitchen makeovers start with discussions about new cabinets and countertops. It makes sense, since these are probably the two most important things to consider when it comes to making your kitchen more efficient, convenient, and beautiful. If you can afford it, install custom cabinets in your kitchen. They are built to fit so they make the best use of the space you have to work with, and you can choose the perfect building materials and finishes to fit your home design and personality. When it comes to countertops, stone is always a homeowner favorite. If you want to add a little more character to your kitchen, however, take a look at the wide variety of ceramic tile on the market as well.

Kitchen Makeovers: Flooring

Kitchen flooring is another important consideration when its time to remodel. Unlike some other areas of the home, it's wise to choose a flooring material that is resistant to the inevitable spills, splashes, and stains that cooking and eating areas are sure to

experience. Stone and ceramic tile, along with laminate flooring, are your best bets here, though any hard surface will work if you're diligent about cleaning up messes and spills as soon as they happen, and are willing to pay a little extra up front for protective sealant.

Kitchen Makeovers: Appliances and Fixtures

Advances in technology are hard to keep up with these days, and kitchen appliances and fixtures are no exception. For appliances, visit a retailer and get an idea of what's out there. Induction cooktops, steam assist ovens, microwave drawers, and undercounter freezers can help transform your kitchen into a chef's paradise at the drop of a hat. When you move on to choosing fixtures, think convenience, looks, and innovation. Apron sinks, pot fillers, pull out faucets, and water stations are just a few of the thousands of innovative designs you'll have to choose from.

Eat in Kitchens and Kitchen Nooks

Why simply update kitchen cabinets and appliances, when you can re-envision the entire space? Building an eat-in kitchen that includes a dining bar and space for a kitchen table is a great way to adapt your kitchen to meet the current trend of the kitchen as the heart of the home. And if you're looking for something a little more quaint, how about a kitchen nook? Installed in an area with large windows that overlook views or garden areas,



a kitchen nook is a wonderful place to sit and chat with family members, or just to enjoy your morning cup of coffee.

Other Ideas for Kitchen Makeovers

Of course, these ideas are just scratching the surface of what's possible. From kitchen entertainment centers to custom lighting, there's an almost limitless number of possibilities when it comes to kitchen design. If you're thinking about a kitchen remodel, talk to a kitchen remodeler or kitchen designer about helping you come up with the perfect design to update kitchen space in your home. These professionals live, eat, and breathe kitchen design. If you're looking to get the most out of your new kitchen, they are the first people you should call. •

Matt Goering, formerly a carpenter and house painter, is a freelance writer for the home improvement industry who has published over 600 articles.

CONTRACTORS OF THE YEAR

The National Association of the Remodeling Industry awarded McHales Kitchens & Baths two awards. One for Residential Bathrooms under \$30,000 and the second for Residential kitchens under \$30,000 - we look forward to future competitions.



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE JERSEY BOYS!

We are pleased to announce that Mc Hales KBA will be expanding into South Jersey. John Harrison and Michael Dotts will lead the Mc Hales KBA team. We'll be remodeling kitchens & baths from Burlington to Cape May. John Harrison resides in Egg Harbor N.J. and is an award winning designer. He has over 30 years of remodeling experience and is a designer with Mc Hales for over 11 years. Michael Dotts, originally from Langhorne PA, has relocated to Ocean City, N.J. Michael sharpened his plumbing, tile & carpentry skills at Mc Hales for 9 years.



John Harrison



Michael Dotts



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SHOWROOM SPOTLIGHT: DESIGN CENTER

The New KBA Design Center is working out better than expected. Our customers can see exactly what their selections will look like when their project is completed. We'll simulate the lighting in your home to our lighting center. We have natural sunlight, LED, CFL, Incandescent, Halogen, & Florescent Lights to set the appropriate lighting scenario.

Certified Kitchen Designer, **Doug Mottershead** demonstrates working in the design center. With six different lighting scenarios, our customers can see countless color combinations. The importance of using the correct lighting is crucial to a successful project. Most home centers and showrooms don't have adequate lighting to illuminate the project. Our design center contains Wellborn and Kraftmaid door samples with over a hundred finishes. It features Quartz, Silestone, Granite, Corian, Swanstone and other solid surface samples. We are an Authorized Kohler Showroom and have Kohler fixtures, faucets and matching accessories. We'll pick out ceramic tile, tumbled stone, marble and everything that is needed to put together the entire project. **Call us today at 215-949-3333** to pick out your dream kitchen or bath.



WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Please complete this form and mail it back to us OR email: mchalesinc@comcast.net

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Additional notes: _____

I'd like more info...

CHECK ALL THAT ARE APPLICABLE:

- Kitchen Remodel
- Bath Remodel
- 12 Month - Same as Cash
- Best Value Bath Package
- 10% Off All Service Work
(Customer Loyalty Program)
- Cabinet Sales
- Plumbing Repairs
- Electrical Services
- Shower Doors
- Countertops & Tile
- Appliance Repairs
- HVAC Services