

Essentials for a do it yourself spa bathroom

Relaxing at a spa each week may be a luxury reserved for celebrities and socialites. For many people, a day spa is a treat enjoyed on special occasions or while on vacation. However, home

bathrooms can be designed to provide the same types of amenities offered at day spas right in the comfort of one's home. The American Psychological Association says that

money, work and the future of the country are particularly strong stressors today. Eighty percent of workers feel stress on the job and learning how to manage stress is a top concern, according to the American Institute of Stress. Creating a Zen-like retreat at home can help alleviate stress and improve health.

Homeowners whose renovation plans include turning a bathroom into a spa oasis will need to choose which features they desire most. These suggestions can spur on more ideas to create the ideal retreat.

· Soaker bathtub: There's something to be said about a luxurious soak in a tub. Tubs come in different sizes and shapes, like the highly recognizable clawfoot tub and other freestanding units. These types of tubs, as well as corner tubs, can offer deep-seated luxury by way of a relaxing and restorative soak. Pair with scented bath bombs or salts for a true spa experience.

· Steam shower: Steam showers are self-enclosed units that feature generators that deliver steam through steam heads. The steam fills the space and can help a person unwind before a refreshing shower or bath. According to the retailer Modern Bathroom®, modern steam showers come with digital controls, which makes it easy for users to activate the shower, adjust



Plenty of natural light and luxurious amenities can contribute to a relaxing spa experience at home.

the length of time that the shower will operate and adjust temperature controls. Extra features like music, mood lighting and aromatherapy can be included as well.

· Heated floors: Heated floors provide the utmost in comfort when stepping out of the bath or shower. They can warm the room and make using the space more comfortable in cold weather.

· Vessel sinks: A ves-

sel sink typically features a bowl or basin that looks like it was placed on top of the vanity. Vessel sinks can elevate the ambiance in spa bathrooms.

· Plush towels and robes: In addition to fixtures and other functional components of the bath, linens are key. Soft-spun Egyptian or Turkish cotton towels and robes are a must-have luxury for the full spa experience.

· Comfortable seat: A

bench or chair nestled by a bathroom window is the perfect spot for pedicures or catching up on some light reading.

· Natural light: Skylights or privacy-ensuring windows are a must to create a relaxing space close to nature.

A spa bathroom at home is within reach. With a few touches, any bathroom can be transformed into a luxurious oasis.

Basement remodeling tips

A basement remodeling project can add valuable and usable space to a home. For many years, homeowners overlooked the potential of a basement remodel, perhaps thinking it would not be a smart return on investment. But that's no longer the case.

The latest "Cost vs. Value" report from Remodeling magazine says the average basement remodel can cost around \$61,000 with a 70.3 percent recoup rate. In addition, HGTV says architects and contractors indicate the cost of redoing a basement is roughly one-third to one-half less than the price of putting an addition on a home.

Before remodeling a basement, homeowners should think about how they want to use the space. Homeowners also must focus on some potential obstacles in a basement that will need to be addressed so that the area can be as functional as possible.

Basements can be chilly and damp. That means moisture issues and heating and cooling needs must be addressed prior to any construction. Homeowners may have to consider the installation of a dehumidifier and run venting through the basement

to allow for proper climate control. If a basement takes on water, either through the walls or a concrete slab, a professional waterproofing company can come in and fix these issues so they will not damage drywall and flooring afterwards.

The presence of insects and pests also must be addressed. Exterminators can help homeowners figure out which insects are in their basements and how to make the space less hospitable to these unwelcome guests so that the room will become comfortable for human occupants.

Space is often at a premium in basements, which may contain HVAC units, water heaters, filtration devices, ductwork, pipes, and the other appliances. Qualified contractors can suggest solutions for cordoning off appliances and camouflaging pipes and wires so they won't detract from the finished product. However, building access panels into the design will make it easier to service or repair features as necessary. Homeowners also may want to wrap pipes before drywall is installed to quiet

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