

What should you consider when planning the design of a bathroom? Ewa Shephard, home design consultant for Fired Earth Interiors, offers a checklist to ensure you get the oasis of calm and relaxation that you need.

The right bathroom can play a key role in turning a house into a home. You've got the fabulous kitchen which suits your family life down to the ground, but what about that mouldy smelly room you call a bathroom? Get the design, ambience and layout as you want them to be, and you will create a room perfect for relaxing in, as well as adding extra value to your home.

Here are 10 useful tips to get you started:

1. Consider how many people will be using the bathroom, and what constraints will be placed on it in terms of size. Is the room to be used by all the family, including the children, or can it be transformed into a grown-up island of indulgence?
2. Do you want traditional or contemporary fixtures, or an eclectic mix of both? This is an important consideration; the look and feel of the bathroom should be in keeping with the overall design plan of the house, but this is somewhere you can also ring the changes a little.
3. If you use cast-iron fittings (such as a roll-top bath) or a solid marble shower tray, you may need to have your floor joists reinforced - you don't want to end up with an en-suite sitting room!
4. Consider placing the bath centrally for maximum visual impact. Doing so can underline the feeling that you are the centre of attention.
5. Unless they are to be placed quite a distance from each other, don't buy ceramic ware from different manufacturers, as there might be slight tonal colour variations.
6. When installing a new bathroom, take the opportunity to update the plumbing so that everything works beautifully. Why buy a beautiful new dress when your underwear leaves much to be desired?



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7. When calculating your budget, remember to allow for important extras, such as flooring, wall tiles and lighting.
8. Think about all the items, large and small, that will need to be stored in the bathroom. Where will they go? Open shelving for gorgeous towels and toiletries works well, but there will be other items you'll want to store away invisibly.
9. Ventilation is the key to any good bathroom, especially one which has no windows. Modern systems can do this efficiently and quietly.
10. Wet rooms are ideal if you want a cutting-edge bathroom, but the correct plumbing, waterproofing and subfloor are essential, so please do bring in the professionals to advise you on this aspect!

Follow these easy tips and you're well on your way to a serene and relaxing bathing experience.

Fired Earth Interiors is based at Darts Farm Village, near Topsham, Exeter. Tel: 01392 878252 or visit www.firedearth.com. Open seven days per week. The interior design service costs £150 per room and includes a home visit with supporting presentation at the showroom (fee is fully refundable, subject to terms & conditions).