

OTTAWA BATHROOMS

How-To Guides

Step-by-step bathroom renovation instructions for
Ottawa homeowners

19 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

ottawabathrooms.ca/construction-brain

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Q1

How do I install a new shower head?

Replacing a shower head is one of the few bathroom tasks most homeowners can confidently handle themselves — no permits required, no special tools needed, and it typically takes under 30 minutes.

What You'll Need

Pick up an adjustable wrench or pliers, plumber's tape (Teflon tape), and your new shower head. You can find all of these at any Ottawa hardware store like Home Depot, Rona, or a local plumbing supply shop.

Step-by-Step Installation

Start by turning off the water supply — for just a shower head swap, you don't need to shut off the main; simply turn off the shower valve. Use your wrench or pliers to unscrew the old shower head counterclockwise from the shower arm (the pipe sticking out of the wall). Wrap the threads of the shower arm with 2-3 layers of Teflon tape, wrapping clockwise so it doesn't unravel when you thread on the new head.

Hand-tighten the new shower head clockwise onto the arm until snug, then give it one final quarter-turn with your wrench. Avoid over-tightening, which can crack the fitting. Turn the water back on and check for leaks at the connection point — if you see dripping, a bit more Teflon tape usually solves it.

When to Call a Professional

If you're noticing low water pressure, the shower arm itself is corroded or damaged, or you want to upgrade to a completely new shower system with body jets or a thermostatic valve, that's where a licensed plumber should get involved. Those upgrades involve opening walls and modifying supply lines, which require permits in Ottawa.

A simple shower head swap is a great DIY win. But if your project grows into anything beyond that, Ottawa Bathrooms offers free consultations to help you plan the right upgrade for your space.

Q2

How do I remove and replace caulk around my bathtub?

Removing and replacing bathtub caulk is a manageable DIY project that can refresh your bathroom's appearance and prevent water damage. Old, cracked, or moldy caulk should be replaced promptly to maintain a watertight seal around your tub.

Start by removing the old caulk completely. Use a caulk removal tool, utility knife, or razor blade to carefully cut and scrape away all existing caulk from both the tub edge and wall. Take your time with this step - any remaining old caulk will prevent the new caulk from adhering properly. For stubborn residue, apply a caulk softener product and let it sit for the recommended time before scraping. Clean the area thoroughly with rubbing alcohol or a degreasing cleaner to remove soap scum, mold, and any remaining debris.

Choose the right caulk for your bathroom environment. Use 100% silicone caulk specifically designed for bathrooms - it's mold and mildew resistant and maintains flexibility over time. Avoid latex or acrylic caulks in wet areas as they're more prone to cracking and mold growth. In Ottawa's climate with temperature fluctuations, silicone's flexibility is particularly important for maintaining a durable seal.

Apply the new caulk with proper technique for a professional finish. Cut the caulk tube tip at a 45-degree angle to create a bead slightly smaller than your gap. Apply steady, even pressure while moving the gun at a consistent speed along the joint. Immediately smooth the bead with your finger dipped in soapy water, or use a caulk smoothing tool. Remove excess caulk with a damp cloth before it starts to skin over (usually within 10-15 minutes).

Allow proper curing time before using your tub. Most silicone caulks need 24-48 hours to fully cure, though they may be touch-dry in a few hours. Avoid getting the area wet during this time to ensure a strong, watertight seal. Good ventilation will help the caulking cure properly.

For extensive caulk replacement throughout your bathroom or if you discover underlying water damage during removal, consider consulting with Ottawa Bathrooms for a professional assessment and proper waterproofing solutions.

Q3

How do I remove old bathroom tile?

Removing old bathroom tile requires the right tools and technique to avoid damaging the wall surface underneath. Start by removing grout with a manual grout removal tool or oscillating multi-tool, then use a hammer and chisel or reciprocating saw to break tiles away from the wall.

Begin with proper preparation by turning off electricity to any switches or outlets in the work area and covering floors and fixtures with plastic sheeting. Remove all grout lines first using a manual grout removal tool, rotary tool with grout removal attachment, or oscillating multi-tool. This step is crucial - trying to remove tiles with grout still in place often damages the drywall behind.

For tile removal itself, start at corners or edges where possible. Use a hammer and cold chisel, positioning the chisel at a 30-degree angle behind the tile. Work systematically across the wall, being careful not to gouge the drywall. A reciprocating saw with a tile removal blade can speed up the process on larger areas, but requires more skill to avoid wall damage. **Always wear safety glasses and a dust mask** - tile removal creates sharp fragments and dust.

In Ottawa's older homes, you may encounter tiles installed over plaster walls or even directly over wood lath. These surfaces are more fragile than modern drywall, so work more carefully and expect some surface repair afterward. If you discover asbestos-containing materials (common in homes built before 1980), stop work immediately and consult with a certified abatement contractor.

After tile removal, scrape off remaining adhesive with a putty knife and sand smooth any high spots. You'll likely need to prime and patch the wall surface before installing new tile. **Consider the scope of your project** - if you're planning a full bathroom renovation with plumbing or electrical changes, this is an ideal time to have licensed contractors handle the entire job, ensuring proper waterproofing and code compliance.

For extensive tile removal or if you discover complications like water damage or structural issues, request a consultation with experienced renovation contractors who can assess the full scope of work needed.

Q4

How do I install bathroom wall tile?

Bathroom wall tile installation is a complex project that requires proper waterproofing, precise layout, and specialized tools. While experienced DIYers can handle small accent areas, full bathroom tiling typically requires professional installation to ensure proper waterproofing and avoid costly water damage.

Proper preparation is critical for bathroom tile installation. The wall surface must be completely level, clean, and properly waterproofed with a membrane system behind the tile. Any plumbing or electrical work needs to be completed first, and in Ottawa, this often requires permits and inspections before tiling can begin. The substrate - whether drywall, cement board, or waterproof backer board - must be appropriate for wet areas and properly secured.

Layout and cutting require precision to achieve professional results. You'll need to establish level reference lines, plan your tile pattern to minimize cuts around fixtures, and ensure consistent spacing. Bathroom installations involve complex cuts around plumbing fixtures, outlets, and corners that require specialized tile cutting tools. The adhesive must be appropriate for bathroom conditions and applied with the correct trowel size for your tile type.

Waterproofing behind bathroom tile is mandatory under the Ontario Building Code, especially in shower areas. This involves installing a proper vapor barrier and waterproof membrane system that ties into your shower pan or tub. Improper waterproofing is the leading cause of bathroom renovation failures and can result in extensive water damage to framing and adjacent rooms.

Professional installation ensures warranty protection and proper technique. Licensed contractors understand Ottawa's specific requirements, carry liability insurance, and can address any structural issues discovered during installation. They also have access to commercial-grade waterproofing systems and can ensure your installation meets code requirements.

For a free estimate on professional tile installation that includes proper waterproofing and warranty protection, request a quote from Ottawa Bathrooms.

Q5

How do I remove a bathroom vanity?

Removing a bathroom vanity is a manageable DIY project for most homeowners, but requires careful attention to plumbing and electrical connections. Start by shutting off the water supply valves under the sink

and turning off electricity at the breaker if there are electrical outlets or lighting fixtures attached to the vanity.

Begin by disconnecting the plumbing connections. Remove the P-trap under the sink by loosening the slip nuts with channel lock pliers - have a bucket ready to catch water. Disconnect the supply lines from the shut-off valves, and if your faucet connects directly to the vanity, you'll need to disconnect those connections as well. For vanities with electrical outlets or integrated lighting, carefully disconnect the electrical connections after confirming power is off.

Next, detach the countertop from the vanity base. Most countertops are secured with screws from underneath or construction adhesive. Check inside the vanity cabinet for mounting screws and remove them. If the countertop is glued down, you may need to carefully pry it up using a pry bar, working slowly to avoid cracking. Some integrated vanity tops will come off with the entire unit.

Finally, remove the vanity cabinet from the wall. Most vanities are secured to wall studs with screws through the back panel. Locate these screws inside the cabinet and remove them. Have someone help you lift the vanity away from the wall, as even empty cabinets can be heavy and awkward to maneuver in tight bathroom spaces.

Important considerations for Ottawa homes: Older homes may have lead pipes or asbestos-containing materials that require special handling. If you encounter galvanized steel pipes or suspect asbestos in flooring underneath the vanity, stop work and consult a professional. Also, check if your renovation requires permits - while vanity replacement typically doesn't need permits, any plumbing modifications might.

Before starting, take photos of all connections to help with reinstallation. Mark the wall studs and note any irregularities in plumbing or electrical placement. This documentation will be invaluable whether you're installing a new vanity yourself or having professionals handle the installation.

For complex plumbing modifications or if you discover issues during removal, Ottawa Bathrooms offers professional vanity installation services with proper permits and warranty coverage.

Q6

How do I install a frameless shower door?

Installing a frameless shower door requires precise measurements, specialized tools, and experience with heavy glass panels - this is typically best handled by professionals due to safety risks and the potential for expensive mistakes.

Professional installation is strongly recommended because frameless shower doors involve working with heavy tempered glass panels (often 50+ pounds), require perfectly level and plumb walls, and need precise drilling into tile or stone. A single measurement error can result in a door that won't close properly or glass that needs to be reordered. The glass panels are custom-cut and cannot be adjusted on-site if mistakes occur.

The installation process involves several critical steps that require specialized experience. First, the shower opening must be measured with extreme precision - even 1/8" variations can cause problems. The walls need to be perfectly plumb and square, which often requires shimming or adjustment. Heavy-duty hinges must be anchored securely into wall studs or blocking, not just into tile or drywall. The door sweep and seals require careful positioning to prevent water leakage while allowing smooth operation.

In Ottawa's climate, proper sealing is especially important to prevent water damage and mold issues. Professional installers understand local building practices and use appropriate sealants for our temperature variations. They also carry insurance to cover any damage during installation, which is particularly important given that replacement glass panels can cost \$500-2000+ depending on size and features.

Most frameless shower door installations in Ottawa cost \$1,500-4,000 including the door system and professional installation. While this represents a significant investment, professional installation ensures proper function, prevents water damage, and maintains warranty coverage on both the door hardware and installation work.

For a free estimate on frameless shower door installation, request a quote from Ottawa Bathrooms - we handle the entire process from measurement to installation with full insurance coverage.

Q7

How do I hang a bathroom mirror?

Hanging a bathroom mirror properly requires the right hardware for your wall type and mirror weight. The key is using appropriate anchors and ensuring the mirror is level and secure in the humid bathroom environment.

Wall preparation is critical - first locate wall studs using a stud finder, as mounting into studs provides the strongest support. For mirrors over 20 pounds, always hit at least one stud. Mark your desired height (typically 5-10 inches above the vanity) and use a level to mark mounting points. In Ottawa's older homes, you may encounter plaster walls which require special hollow wall anchors.

Choose the right hardware based on your mirror's mounting system. Frameless mirrors often use clips or a French cleat system, while framed mirrors may have wire backing or mounting brackets. For drywall without studs, use heavy-duty toggle bolts or molly bolts rated for your mirror's weight. In tile walls common in bathroom renovations, you'll need masonry bits and appropriate anchors - drill slowly to avoid cracking the tile.

Safety considerations are especially important in bathrooms due to moisture and the risk of injury from broken glass. Ensure all mounting hardware is corrosion-resistant, and consider having a helper for larger mirrors. If you're uncomfortable with the installation or have an expensive mirror, this is often worth hiring a professional to avoid costly mistakes.

For bathroom renovations involving new mirror installation as part of a larger project, Ottawa Bathrooms can handle the complete installation including any electrical work for backlit mirrors or medicine cabinets that may require permits.

Q8

How do I waterproof a shower before tiling?

Proper waterproofing is absolutely critical before tiling any shower - it's the most important step that prevents costly water damage behind your walls. In Ottawa's climate with freeze-thaw cycles, inadequate waterproofing can lead to serious structural issues.

Start with a proper substrate preparation. Your shower walls need to be structurally sound and level. Most contractors use cement board or Hardiebacker as the base, though some prefer Schluter or similar waterproof tile backer systems. The substrate must be properly fastened and all seams sealed according to manufacturer specifications.

Apply a liquid waterproof membrane over the entire shower area. Products like RedGard, Mapei AquaDefense, or Schluter-KERDI are popular choices among Ottawa contractors. The membrane should extend at least 6 inches beyond the shower area on all sides. Pay special attention to corners, where walls meet the floor, and around any penetrations like shower valves or niches. These areas typically need reinforcing fabric embedded in the membrane.

The shower pan waterproofing requires extra attention. The membrane must create a continuous barrier that slopes toward the drain. Many contractors prefer pre-formed shower pans or linear drain systems for reliability. All seams and the drain connection must be properly sealed - this is where most failures occur.

Ottawa's building code requires proper waterproofing for all shower installations, and inspectors will check this work before allowing you to proceed with tiling. Most homeowners should hire licensed contractors for this work, as improper waterproofing can void insurance coverage and create expensive remediation costs.

For a free estimate on professional shower waterproofing and tiling, request a quote from Ottawa Bathrooms - proper preparation is worth the investment.

Q9

How do I install a pedestal sink?

Installing a pedestal sink involves both plumbing connections and proper wall anchoring, making it a moderately complex project that requires careful attention to structural support and water connections.

Planning and Preparation is crucial before starting. You'll need to locate wall studs behind where the sink will mount, as pedestal sinks require solid backing for the wall bracket. The pedestal base primarily provides aesthetic support and stability, but the wall mounting carries most of the weight. Turn off water supply valves and have a plan for connecting to existing plumbing lines. In Ottawa homes, you may encounter older galvanized or copper supply lines that could require adapter fittings.

The installation process begins with positioning the pedestal and sink to mark mounting points on the wall. Install the wall mounting bracket into studs using appropriate lag bolts - never rely on drywall anchors alone for sink support. Connect the water supply lines and drain assembly before final positioning. The pedestal should align properly with the sink base, and you may need to adjust the pedestal position slightly by shimming. Apply plumber's putty or silicone around the drain connection and ensure all joints are properly tightened.

Ottawa Building Code considerations typically don't require permits for simple fixture replacement, but if you're moving plumbing lines or adding new water connections, permits may be required. The installation must meet

proper clearance requirements - typically 30 inches of clear space in front of the sink and appropriate spacing from other fixtures.

Professional installation is often worthwhile given the precision required for wall mounting and plumbing connections. Improper installation can lead to leaks, loose fixtures, or wall damage. Many Ottawa homeowners find the cost of professional installation (\$300-600) reasonable compared to potential water damage from mistakes.

For a proper installation with warranty coverage, consider getting a quote from licensed bathroom contractors who can ensure code compliance and proper waterproofing.

Q10

How do I install a toilet paper holder?

Installing a toilet paper holder is a straightforward DIY project that most homeowners can complete in 15-30 minutes with basic tools. You'll need a drill, level, pencil, and the appropriate screws or anchors for your wall type.

Start by choosing the right location - typically 26 inches from the floor to the center of the holder and 8-12 inches in front of the toilet seat. Mark your mounting holes with a pencil, using a level to ensure they're straight. For drywall installation, you'll need wall anchors unless you can hit a stud. Hold the mounting bracket against the wall and mark through the screw holes.

Drill pilot holes slightly smaller than your screws to prevent the drywall from cracking. If you're mounting into tile (common in Ottawa bathrooms), use a masonry bit and go slowly to avoid cracking the tile. Insert your wall anchors if needed, then attach the mounting brackets with screws. Most toilet paper holders have a spring-loaded bar that slides into the mounted brackets.

In Ottawa homes, you'll often encounter different wall materials depending on the age of your house. Older homes may have plaster walls that require different anchors than modern drywall. If you're installing in a newly renovated bathroom with tile walls, take extra care not to crack the tile - consider having this done during your renovation to avoid potential damage.

Test the holder by gently pulling on it to ensure it's secure before loading it with toilet paper. The spring mechanism should hold the bar firmly in place while still allowing easy paper roll changes.

Q11

How do I install a bathroom exhaust fan?

Installing a bathroom exhaust fan is an electrical and ventilation project that requires careful planning and typically needs permits in Ottawa. While the basic concept involves mounting the fan, running ductwork, and connecting electrical, this project involves working with electrical circuits and cutting into your home's structure.

The installation process begins with selecting the right fan size (measured in CFM - cubic feet per minute) for your bathroom. The general rule is 1 CFM per square foot of bathroom space, with a minimum of 50 CFM. You'll need to cut a ceiling opening, install the fan housing between joists, run flexible or rigid ductwork to an exterior wall or roof vent, and connect the electrical wiring to a switch.

In Ottawa, this work requires electrical and building permits since you're modifying electrical circuits and creating new openings in your home's envelope. The electrical connection must be done by a licensed electrician, and the ductwork must terminate outside (never into an attic or soffit) to prevent moisture problems. Ottawa's climate makes proper ventilation critical - inadequate exhaust can lead to condensation issues and mold growth during our cold winters.

Proper ductwork installation is crucial for effectiveness and building code compliance. The duct run should be as short and straight as possible, with insulated ducting in unconditioned spaces. The exterior termination needs a proper damper and pest screen. Many homeowners underestimate the complexity of routing ductwork through existing framing and insulation.

For most homeowners, hiring a licensed contractor is the safer choice. The electrical work alone requires an electrician, and improper installation can create moisture problems, noise issues, or inadequate ventilation. A professional installation ensures proper sizing, code compliance, and warranty coverage.

For a free estimate on bathroom exhaust fan installation as part of your renovation project, request a quote from Ottawa Bathrooms.

Q12

How do I install a towel bar?

Installing a towel bar is a straightforward DIY project that most homeowners can complete in 30-60 minutes with basic tools. The key is proper wall anchor selection and ensuring the bar is level and securely mounted.

Start by choosing the right location - typically 48 inches from the floor and at least 24 inches of clear towel space. Mark your mounting points using a level to ensure the bar will be straight. For drywall installation, locate wall studs if possible using a stud finder, as this provides the strongest mounting. If studs aren't available in your desired location, heavy-duty drywall anchors rated for at least 50 pounds will work well.

For tile walls common in Ottawa bathrooms, use masonry bits and appropriate anchors. Drill slowly to avoid cracking the tile, and consider using painter's tape over the drill area to prevent the bit from slipping. In older Ottawa homes with plaster walls, toggle bolts or molly bolts provide excellent holding power.

The installation process involves drilling pilot holes, inserting anchors, and securing the mounting brackets with screws. Most towel bars come with paper templates to help mark hole locations accurately. Test the installation by gently pulling on the bar before hanging towels - it should feel solid with no movement.

Choose quality mounting hardware as bathroom humidity can cause cheaper materials to rust or fail. Stainless steel or brass hardware performs best in Ottawa's climate. If you're uncomfortable drilling into expensive tile or aren't confident about hitting studs properly, this is an affordable project for a handyman to complete professionally.

How do I fix a running toilet?

A running toilet is usually caused by a few common issues that are relatively easy to diagnose and fix yourself. The most frequent culprits are a warped flapper that won't seal properly, a chain that's too long or short, or a water level that's set incorrectly.

Start by removing the toilet tank lid and looking inside. If water is continuously running into the bowl, check if the rubber flapper at the bottom of the tank is seating properly. The flapper should lay flat against the flush valve seat - if it's warped, cracked, or has mineral buildup preventing a good seal, it needs replacement. You can find replacement flappers at any hardware store for under \$10.

Check the chain connecting the flush handle to the flapper. If the chain is too long, the flapper won't lift fully when you flush. If it's too short, the flapper can't close completely. Adjust the chain so there's about 1/2 inch of slack when the flapper is closed. The chain should lift the flapper fully when you press the handle, then allow it to drop and seal completely.

Examine the water level in the tank. The water should sit about 1 inch below the rim of the tank. If it's too high, water will continuously flow into the overflow tube. You can adjust this by bending the float arm (on older toilets) or adjusting the float mechanism (on newer models). The fill valve may need replacement if adjustments don't solve the problem.

In Ottawa's hard water conditions, mineral buildup can cause these components to fail more frequently. If these basic adjustments don't solve the running toilet, or if you're uncomfortable working with the internal mechanisms, the issue might be a worn fill valve or flush valve assembly that requires replacement. For persistent problems or if you're planning other bathroom updates, Ottawa Bathrooms can handle toilet repairs and replacements as part of comprehensive bathroom renovations.

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How do I replace a bathroom faucet?

Replacing a bathroom faucet is a manageable DIY project for most homeowners, though it requires some basic plumbing knowledge and the right tools. The key is taking your time with the preparation and ensuring you have a proper water shutoff.

Start by shutting off the water supply at the shutoff valves under the sink (turn clockwise) or at the main water line if individual valves aren't available. Turn on the existing faucet to drain any remaining water from the lines. You'll need an adjustable wrench, pliers, plumber's tape, and possibly a basin wrench for tight spaces under the sink.

Remove the old faucet by disconnecting the water supply lines from underneath (these may be threaded or compression fittings) and unscrewing the mounting nuts that hold the faucet to the sink. Single-handle faucets typically have one large mounting nut, while widespread faucets have separate nuts for each handle and spout. Clean the sink surface thoroughly once the old faucet is removed.

For installation in Ottawa homes, ensure your new faucet matches the existing hole configuration in your sink - single hole, 4-inch centerset, or 8-inch widespread are the most common. Many older Ottawa homes have unique sink configurations, so measure carefully before purchasing. Apply plumber's tape to threaded connections and hand-tighten supply lines first, then use a wrench for a final quarter-turn to avoid over-tightening.

Test your work thoroughly by turning the water supply back on slowly and checking for leaks at all connections. Run both hot and cold water for several minutes to ensure proper flow and temperature mixing. If you encounter corroded supply lines, unusual pipe configurations, or persistent leaks, it's worth having a licensed plumber complete the installation to avoid water damage.

For complex installations or if you're uncomfortable with any step, Ottawa Bathrooms offers fixture installation services with proper warranties and insurance coverage.

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How do I replace a toilet?

Toilet replacement is a moderate DIY project that requires basic plumbing skills, but many homeowners prefer having a licensed plumber handle it to ensure proper installation and avoid potential water damage.

Replacing a toilet involves several key steps that must be done carefully. First, you'll need to **shut off the water supply** at the valve behind the toilet and completely drain the tank and bowl. Remove the old toilet by disconnecting the water supply line, unbolting it from the floor, and lifting it straight up - toilets are heavy (60-100 lbs) and awkward to maneuver, so having a helper is essential.

Proper preparation of the flange and wax ring is critical for preventing leaks. The toilet flange (the pipe connection in the floor) must be level with or slightly above the finished floor surface. If it's too low or damaged, it needs repair before installing the new toilet. A new wax ring creates the watertight seal between the toilet and the drain pipe - this must be positioned correctly on the first try, as repositioning the toilet can compromise the seal.

In Ottawa, **toilet replacement typically costs \$400-\$800 when professionally installed**, including the toilet and labor. The Ontario Building Code requires proper venting and drainage connections, and any modifications to plumbing lines require permits. If you're upgrading to a comfort-height toilet or moving the toilet location, professional installation is strongly recommended.

Installation challenges include ensuring the toilet sits level (shimming may be required), achieving proper bolt tension without cracking the porcelain, and confirming the wax ring creates a complete seal. Water damage from improper installation can be expensive to repair and may not be covered by insurance if installed incorrectly.

For a professional toilet installation with warranty coverage, request a quote from Ottawa Bathrooms - we handle everything from basic replacements to accessibility upgrades with comfort-height models.

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How do I replace grout in my shower?

Replacing shower grout is a manageable DIY project that can refresh your shower's appearance and prevent water damage. The key is thorough removal of old grout and proper application of new grout with adequate waterproofing.

Start by **removing the old grout** using a grout removal tool, oscillating multi-tool, or manual grout rake. Remove grout to a depth of at least two-thirds of the tile thickness - shallow removal leads to poor adhesion and early failure. Clean out all loose debris with a vacuum and damp cloth. For shower areas, inspect the underlying surface for any signs of water damage or mold that may need addressing before proceeding.

Choose the right grout type for your shower environment. Epoxy grout offers superior water resistance and stain protection, making it ideal for shower walls, though it's more challenging to work with. Sanded grout works well for joints wider than 1/8 inch, while unsanded grout suits narrower joints. In Ottawa's climate with temperature fluctuations, ensure your grout has good flexibility to prevent cracking.

Apply the new grout by working it into joints at a 45-degree angle using a rubber float, ensuring complete fill without air pockets. Remove excess grout with the float's edge, then clean tile surfaces with a damp sponge before the grout fully sets. Allow proper curing time - typically 24-72 hours depending on humidity levels common in Ottawa homes.

Critical waterproofing step: Replace caulk around tub edges, corners, and where tile meets fixtures. Use 100% silicone caulk rated for bathrooms, as this flexible seal prevents water from getting behind tiles where grout cannot flex with building movement.

For extensive grout replacement or if you discover water damage during removal, consider consulting with experienced bathroom renovation contractors who can assess whether underlying waterproof membranes need attention.

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How do I paint a bathroom properly?

Proper bathroom painting requires moisture-resistant materials and thorough surface preparation to prevent peeling, mold, and water damage in Ottawa's humid climate.

Surface preparation is critical for lasting results. Start by cleaning all surfaces with TSP (trisodium phosphate) to remove soap scum, mildew, and grease. Sand any glossy surfaces lightly to help the new paint adhere. Fill holes and cracks with paintable caulk or filler, and remove any loose or peeling paint completely. In older Ottawa homes, test for lead paint before sanding if the house was built before 1978.

Choose the right paint and primer for bathroom conditions. Use a high-quality primer designed for bathrooms - this creates a moisture barrier and helps the topcoat adhere properly. For the finish coat, select a paint specifically formulated for high-humidity areas, typically a semi-gloss or satin finish acrylic latex paint with mildew-resistant properties. These finishes are easier to clean and more resistant to moisture than flat paints.

Proper ventilation during and after painting is essential, especially during Ottawa's humid summers. Run your exhaust fan continuously while painting and for several hours afterward. Open windows when weather permits to improve air circulation. Apply thin, even coats rather than trying to cover everything in one heavy application - this prevents drips and ensures better adhesion.

Pay special attention to high-moisture areas like around the tub, shower, and sink. Use paintable caulk to seal gaps between the wall and fixtures before painting. Consider using a moisture-resistant primer in these areas even if the rest of the bathroom doesn't require it.

For best results on a complete bathroom renovation including proper moisture barriers and ventilation improvements, request a quote from Ottawa Bathrooms for professional preparation and finishing work.

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How do I install a bathroom vanity?

Installing a bathroom vanity requires careful attention to plumbing connections, proper support, and waterproofing to prevent costly water damage. While homeowners can handle basic vanity swaps with similar plumbing configurations, most installations benefit from professional expertise to ensure everything is properly sealed and code-compliant.

Preparation is critical before starting any vanity installation. Turn off water supply valves and disconnect existing plumbing lines carefully - old shutoff valves often fail when disturbed and may need replacement. Remove the old vanity by unscrewing it from wall studs and carefully lifting it out. Check that your new vanity will fit properly and that plumbing lines align with the new configuration.

Proper wall support ensures your vanity won't sag or pull away over time. Locate wall studs using a stud finder and mark their positions. Most vanities need to be secured into at least two studs for adequate support. If studs don't align with your vanity's mounting points, install a horizontal mounting board between studs first. For heavier stone countertops, additional blocking may be required.

Plumbing connections are where many DIY installations run into trouble. The supply lines and drain assembly must align perfectly with your new vanity's plumbing layout. If modifications are needed - like moving supply valves or adjusting drain height - this requires a licensed plumber in Ottawa. Even minor misalignments can cause leaks that lead to expensive water damage behind walls.

In Ottawa's market, basic vanity installation typically runs \$400-800 for professional installation, while custom work with plumbing modifications ranges \$800-2,000. Given that water damage from improper installation can cost thousands to repair, many homeowners find professional installation worthwhile for peace of mind.

For complex installations or when plumbing modifications are needed, request a quote from Ottawa Bathrooms for professional installation that includes proper waterproofing and warranty coverage.

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How do I pick the right size medicine cabinet?

The right medicine cabinet size depends on your vanity width, storage needs, and bathroom layout. As a general rule, your medicine cabinet should be 4-6 inches narrower than your vanity to maintain visual balance.

Standard sizing guidelines work well for most Ottawa bathrooms. For a 24-inch vanity, choose an 18-20 inch cabinet. A 30-inch vanity pairs with a 24-26 inch cabinet, while larger 36-48 inch vanities can accommodate 30-36 inch medicine cabinets. Single-person bathrooms typically need 16-24 inches of width, while shared bathrooms benefit from 30+ inches to provide adequate storage for multiple users.

Consider your storage requirements when selecting depth and interior features. Standard medicine cabinets are 4-6 inches deep, which accommodates most toiletries and medications. Look for adjustable shelves to customize storage for tall bottles or small items. If you have limited counter space, a deeper cabinet (up to 8 inches) can store more items but may interfere with lighting fixtures.

Installation height and clearance matter for daily functionality. Mount the cabinet so the bottom shelf sits at eye level for the primary users - typically 60-66 inches from the floor. Ensure at least 4 inches of clearance between the cabinet and any light fixtures above. In Ottawa homes with lower ceilings, recessed medicine cabinets work better than surface-mounted options to maximize headroom.

Measure carefully before purchasing and consider the electrical implications. Check for electrical wires or plumbing behind the wall if installing a recessed cabinet. Surface-mounted cabinets offer more flexibility but project further into the room.

For a professional assessment of your bathroom layout and storage solutions, Ottawa Bathrooms can help you select the perfect medicine cabinet size during your renovation consultation.

Find a Bathroom Renovation Contractor

Ottawa Bathrooms connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://justynrookcontracting.com>:

- RenoMotion Inc. ?
- MAK Construction and Development Inc ?
- Humble Homes - property maintenance ?

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