



**Creating Order, Relieving Stress, Improving Your Life...**

## Your Organized Bathroom Retreat

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If your bathroom is not the relaxing retreat you've always dreamed of, but rather the drop off point for laundry, half-used health and beauty products, and other clutter, then here are some suggestions for turning things around.

Start by emptying cabinets, drawers, and countertops and throwing away these items:

- Products whose expiration dates have passed.
- Old bottles of shampoo, conditioner, lotions and shaving products whose contents are virtually empty.
- Expired medicines and those intended for one time use, such as antibiotics or eye drops.
- Products that give you a rash, smell funny, or are oozing out of their tubes.
- Makeup that's old, dried, cracked and separated, or doesn't compliment your skin color.
- Bars of soap which are too small to use.
- Broken and unused appliances, like hair dryers, shavers, curling irons and straightening wands.
- Old perfumes and nail polish.
- Combs with missing teeth.
- Toothbrushes over three months old.
- Broken jewelry, earrings and cuff links without a match (they're probably hiding out with those missing socks.)

**Donate these:**

**Unopened, unused travel soaps, shampoos, conditioners, shoe shine cloths, shower caps, sewing kits, and any other miniature-sized products you don't intend to use. Women's shelters and nursing homes love these thoughtful gifts.**

Now that you've gotten down to essentials it's time to re-assess your organizing strategy. In any bathroom, there's usually some combination of drawers, cabinets, and shelving. Consider adding or increasing one or more of these elements to solve tricky storage problems.

## Drawers

Shallow drawers work best for storing small flat items like jewelry, makeup, hair pins, combs, hair bands, and small accessories. To keep the contents from sliding around and getting mixed together each time you open the drawer, purchase drawer organizers.

One type allows you to measure, cut, and attach plastic dividers in the exact configuration you need. If you prefer a simpler method, you may opt for individual trays of various lengths, widths and depths which can be arranged and rearranged as often as necessary, or buy one large tray with several built-in, permanent compartments.

You can also purchase trays that sit on top of the drawer (inside it) that you can slide forward and backward. This offers the option of creating a "double decker" storage area. Just remember you'll have less room underneath for other items.

Deeper drawers are handy for storing larger, bulkier items and electrical appliances such as hair dryers, shavers, and styling tools. Accessories can be stored along with them in separate containers to keep them organized and neat.

## Cabinets and Cupboards

For larger or taller items, cleaning supplies, or bottles con-

taining liquids which must be stored upright, under-the-sink storage may be the best choice. Here you can keep soap refills, shampoo and conditioner, nail polish remover, hair spray, and other grooming products. If you have a pedestal sink these items can be stored in a nearby cupboard or cabinet.

To keep items from falling over when they're kept in a larger area, I like to insert a few square or rectangular plastic containers. I usually sort the contents by category, such as nail products, medicines, or hair care, so that when I want to find a certain type, I know it will be with all the others just like it. Then, I can easily pull out the container, use what I need, and put the whole thing away in one easy gesture.

This method can save valuable time in the morning when you may be in a hurry to get out the door, by reducing the time it takes to find what you need. Containerizing also allows for quicker clean up of spills and keeps things looking neat and tidy.

If you have trouble reaching items in the back of deep cupboards or just enjoy additional convenience, you can purchase pull-out trays, racks, or bins, which are mounted on the floor of the cupboard with a few screws. They come in various sizes, are made of plastic, wire mesh, or other materials and often come with a stackable second level.

For bathrooms with minimal drawer space you can purchase multi-drawer units made from wood, wicker, plastic or metal at your favorite bath store, retail outlet or even the organizing section of your local home improvement store. These can be placed wherever you need them and often fit nicely in narrow under-utilized spaces. You can

also buy smaller versions to keep on the vanity, in a cupboard, or on a shelf.

## Shelves

Your shelving may consist of built-ins, an étagère over the commode, or shelves within a cupboard or cabinet. If they're moveable you'll have even greater opportunities for maximizing their usefulness.

Shelves are popular for storing towels, wash cloths, facial tissues, toilet paper, and other products which require frequent replenishing. They're also great for bottles, sprays and smaller contained items. If your shelves are open and in full view, you can give your bathroom a beautiful, more sophisticated look by keeping smaller items in attractive containers, such as wicker baskets, lacquered boxes, glass or metal jars, or anything suits your taste. By keeping containers covered, their contents will remain discreet, and dust and moisture can be minimized.

Whatever form they're in, shelves are versatile, functional,

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Now that you've gotten organized and maximized your space, let's add the icing to the cake. What better place than your bathroom spa to unwind, forget about the daily annoyances and rejuvenate your body, mind, and spirit. So, what do you do if you don't have a luxurious spa tub? Even the smallest and simplest bathroom can become more inviting by implementing a few of the suggestions below.

- Splurge on new towels, something thick, soft, and beautiful.
- Add warmth, color, and charm to the vanity by adding a small lamp surrounded by a silky ivy garland or small flower arrangement.
- Replace your old or worn out shower curtain with one that's fresh and new. Don't hesitate to use something colorful or buy a rich looking fabric to enhance the beauty of the room.

and desirable, in any bathroom.

## Increasing Storage

If you live in a home or apartment where space is limited, there are many products to help you maximize it. For the shower you can buy a caddy that fits over the shower rod, a vertical pole with mini shelves along its length, or a variety of containers attached with suction cups, in plastic or stainless steel. These provide a convenient way to hold your shampoos, shavers, and other bath essentials.

As I mentioned previously, there are many attractive free-standing cabinets and drawer units available to match any décor. You can also buy wall-mounted cabinets, shelves, and towel racks to maximize the space above your sink, along empty walls, or in that odd shaped nook.

And don't forget the almost endless choice of hooks that can be mounted on walls or added to the door when you need extra space for your family or guests.

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- Place a single large candle on a decorative holder near the vanity or tub, or if space allows, try 3-5 candles of varying heights.
- The sound of trickling water is both soothing and relaxing. If you close your eyes and let your imagination blossom, a small fountain can take you miles away, making you forget you're still at home.
- If aroma therapy is what you long for, add bath salts to running water to fill the room with scent.
- Escape to your bathroom for a quick getaway while you soak in a foot spa or dip your hands in hot wax after a manicure treatment. Invest in a shower massage so you can experience the soothing sensations while standing in warm water.
- If you prefer a long luxurious bath, rest your head on a contoured foam pillow, stretch a bath caddy across the width of the tub, and use the built in holders for your favorite book, a taper candle and glass of wine or sparkling cider.
- Keep a basket filled with body wash, a natural sponge, pumice stone, bath salts and other pampering items near the tub within easy reach.
- Play your favorite soothing music, while you indulge yourself.
- Step out of the shower or bath onto a soft Egyptian cotton bathmat and dry your skin on warm towels from the free-standing or wall mounted electric towel warmer.
- Replenish your skin's moisture with rich soothing lotion from your neck to your toes.
- And finally, take a deep cleansing breath before you return to the world of mortals!

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