

Design Session Tools

Below are all of the tools that we have gone through so far in the Design Sessions with the tools I used to design the Beach House's bathrooms in bold. Unlock these Sessions to get a fuller understanding of the tools so you can apply them to your own design process when designing a bathroom.

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The Design Process

1. Assess the Situation (Tool 25)

The first step of any design process is to assess your situation and your budget. Your budget will likely reflect the value you place on the bathroom depending on if it is a master bathroom, kid's bathroom, powder room or guest bathroom. Typically my clients prefer to spend more on their powder rooms and master bathroom. Here are some questions I recommend asking yourself before you start designing your bathroom:

- How big is your bathroom?
- Do you have room for a bathtub and a shower?
- Do you have quirky areas that could be fixed by moving walls or doors?
- Will you be moving plumbing locations or keeping things where they are?
- Is the space dark?
- Do you want to add any windows?

If you are looking for a quick bathroom fix you might enjoy my YouTube video on a one day bathroom makeover with three different budget levels - \$300, \$600 and \$1,200. [Click here to watch the video!](#)

2. Determine the Style of the Room (Tool 26 & Tool 27)

Having an idea of the overall style you envision for your bathroom is super helpful at this point. You will need a starting point as you shop and look for ideas and inspiration. I like to tie bedroom styles and color schemes to adjoining bathrooms. If your bathroom is a powder room, I recommend keeping the overall color scheme of your main living spaces in mind as you design the bathroom.

3. Go Shopping (Window Shopping That is)

Now that you have your budget and style in mind, it is a good time to go WINDOW shopping! At this early stage you want to see what's out there. Get an idea of what's new, what's affordable and what style you are going for. This will get you excited about the project and get your creative juices flowing! Remember to take photos, gather brochures, take measurements and collect finish samples. You will need these later! Don't let this overwhelm you, I am going to be walking you through the entire design process and it will be so much fun!

4. Make a Floor Plan

My M.O. is to use the 3D modeling program Sketch Up Pro. If you are interested in learning this program you can download a free version of it, and take an easy beginners class I teach on UDEMY. [Click here to check out that course.](#) If you don't want to deal with Sketch Up, no problem! Grab some graph paper and start measuring! In a bathroom, here are a few very important things to think about when making your layout:

A. Storage solutions

Where will you place your vanity and any additional storage cabinets you might need?

B. Plumbing

Will your plumbing stay in its current location after making your floor plan or will you need to move it?

C. Stone and tile

Will you design your bathroom with “flow” in mind? I certainly hope so!

5. **Identify Lighting Locations (Tool 5)**

With your cabinet and plumbing layout figured out, you can now identify where your lighting should go. The electrician is often the first sub-contractor on a project. They will make a mess of the ceiling so it is best to get them in first. Be sure to think of your lighting as layering. Consider a vanity bar light fixture or sconces on either side of the mirror. Also consider adding a wet-rated canned light in the shower itself. If your tile is fabulous you'll be glad you did! You will also need to include a fan in your lighting plan. Make sure to add ample outlets near the sink as well as the surrounding walls! If you have a smart toilet, it will need an outlet with a GFI for safety. Nowadays, I often add a USB outlet so my clients have a place to charge their phones while in the bathroom. The final aspect to your lighting plan is to think about the color of your switch plates and outlet plates. I suggest finding a color that blends with your tile or wall color. Also, request dimmers on all of your light switches and art locations as an added touch!

6. **Choose the Cabinets**

If you are looking to build custom cabinets you will need to decide on the finish materials and look for stores or companies that build cabinets. I highly suggest asking your contractor for recommendations! You can also opt for ready-made vanities. There are plenty of great ready-made vanities on the market today. I tend to like Restoration Hardware's vanities, but there are SO many to choose from!

7. **Complete the Plumbing**

If you are embarking on a full bathroom project you will need a toilet, sink, shower and bathtub. Here are some of my thoughts for each of these aspects of a bathroom:

A. Toilet

If you have plenty of space your toilet can be a standard size. I typically choose the comfort height.

B. Sink

Sinks are where you can pour on some style if you'd like! Vessel sinks are an option, but remember that your vanity height needs to be shorter if you do choose a vessel sink. These days, I'm putting my stylistic juices into other areas so I often choose a low profile, under-mount sink in white.

C. Showers and Bathtubs

Showers are another area for some personality to shine! If possible, I love a flush walk-in with no curb to step over shower. I also like to add hidden soap niches and a comfortable bench seat or foot ledge for shaving. As for bathtubs, I am obsessed with free-standing tubs right now! There are beautiful shapes and a variety of sizes to choose from.

D. Faucets

Faucets are part of the plumbing package as well! I look for amazing shapes for the sink and coordinate it with the shower head whenever possible. I also always try to incorporate a handheld fixture in the shower for convenience. As for my finishes, I try to stay with one finish throughout the bathroom. There are times however, when I do mix things up.

Remember the Denver Loft project where I mixed brushed brass with polished nickel? [Click here to watch the reveal of that project!](#)

As for the style, I recommend you keep the lines similar. If you are buying a complete set from a manufacturer this will be down for you. If however you are mixing manufacturers, keep the overall style and lines cohesive!

8. **Pick Out the Stone (Tool 23)**

You want your countertop material to blend nicely with the tile that you use as a backsplash or in your shower. For countertops in bathrooms I prefer granite, quartzite or marble (but only if the marble has Azerocare© finish applied to it). If you are looking for a clean, modern look, go for Silestone or concrete.

9. **Pick Out the Tile (Tool 19)**

For walls and backsplashes consider the “flow” method. The use of flow in a bathroom is a game changer as far as I’m concerned. Flow creates a wow first impression and makes a space look larger. With flow, there are few lines to cut up a room and define its borders. Flow can be achieved by bringing your tile or stone from the floor to the ceiling and all the way across the wall.

10. **Choose the Doors**

I like to keep my hinges and door handles consistent with the rest of the home. One exception might be to add vintage glass doorknobs to your bathrooms. I often cover the back of the bathroom door with mirror if there is no other full-length mirror close by. In a bathroom, you also have to think about your shower door. I prefer using a frameless glass shower door to enclose the shower. I take the door all the way to the ceiling and drop the swinging door down 12” for airflow in order to eliminate mold and mildew. If you decide to use a fabric shower curtain make sure it is long enough to hang floor to ceiling so the bathroom feels bigger!

11. **Pick the Flooring (Tool 22)**

The type and texture of your floors is an important step in the design process. It covers a large percentage of your room so setting the right foundation is crucial. Do you want your flooring to be cohesive with the flooring from adjacent rooms? Are you fearful of possible water damage? In a bathroom, I often change my flooring to a tile that looks as close as I can get to the flooring I chose for the rest of the home.

12. **Determine Where You Will Have Window Treatments (Tool 6)**

When it comes to window treatments here are a few questions you should ask yourself: Do you need window treatments in your bathroom? Do you need privacy? Is there an alternative to fabric window treatments that you can embrace? How will these treatments coordinate with the other rooms in your house? When I am designing, I prefer using privacy roller shades in a bathroom with a simple fabric valance to cover the drywall above the window!

13. **Pick a Paint Color(s) (Tool 9)**

In a bathroom you have to decide if you will cover all of your walls in tile or stone or if you will paint the drywall. I actually prefer not to cover every single wall in the same tile or stone as to not make the bathroom feel like one large shower. Always opt for a semi-gloss paint over a flat paint in a bathroom because it will hold up much better. If you decide to use wallpaper, vinyl wallpaper is a safer choice over paper or grass cloth. Just remember when picking your paint color or wallpaper for a bathroom, humidity needs to be taken into account!

FINAL TOUCHES ARE ON THEIR WAY...

This is where you add the charm, personality and warmth into your bathroom!

14. **Select the Hardware**

Your knobs and pulls could very well be considered accessories except for their functional nature. I think of them as the style maker in a bathroom! I am careful to coordinate my knobs and pulls with the shape and style of my faucets and plumbing selections. I often keep a consistent look with my hardware, but on occasion I will mix finishes if I have something that will pull it all together! The Denver Loft project again is a great example of this! I prefer to use knobs on smaller drawers, cup pulls on larger drawers and longer bar pulls on cabinets. Remember to coordinate these pulls with your shower door pull! Who knew shower door pulls could be so awesome?

15. **Accessorize (Tool 1 & Tool 15)**

This is my absolute favorite step of the design process. This is where you have the chance to pull everything together! Remember to repeat colors and finishes throughout. Add nice looking toilet paper holders, towel bars, robe hooks, waste cans and coordinating tissue holders. A nice magnifying mirror can be a great addition hanging above the sink or on the sides of the medicine cabinet. Candles are also always a great addition to any bathroom for the fragrance they provide! If there is room in the bathroom I like to add art as well (**Tool 10 & Tool 11**).

16. **Install**

The last and final step - the install! Here is where you see all of your selections go into place and come together. Once this step is complete you can finally enjoy that new bathroom of yours!

