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Where to spend and when to save in a bathroom renovation

BY MELISSA DAVIS

Whereas I grew up in a house with one washroom, new-build homes today seem to have one washroom for every family member. My teenage self would have been in heaven!

Bathrooms are among the priciest renovations and although they rank in the top three for best return on investment (ROI), knowing when to splurge and when to be conservative can have a massive impact on the resale value.

Here are three areas where you need to decide whether or not to spend or save.

1 | Changing the layout

SAVE Fixtures that require water supply and drain-like sinks, tubs and showers can all be swapped and shifted with relative ease. A shower can go where a sink was and vice versa.

SPEND Toilets, on the other hand, require a waste stack. The diameter of that stack is too large to simply cut the floor joists to accommodate, which means to move the toilet, the stack needs to be able to stay within the same joist space or you will have to drop it below the floor and back it up into the new joist cavity. This will leave you with a bulkhead in the ceiling below, which is potentially a massive issue, not to mention all of this can be quite pricey.

TIP Make a wholehearted attempt to work within the existing layout whenever possible. Invest that extra money in more obvious upgrades, like marble and nicer fixtures that have a higher perceived value and a greater ROI.



2 | Tub versus shower

SAVE Most of us opt for an efficient morning shower over a long tub soak. That preference, combined with the spacious hotel shower, commonplace as of late, has a lot of us ready to ditch the old tub/shower combo.

SPEND If you have only one washroom, you need a tub. Resale is about appealing to the greatest potential purchasing pool and no tub means no families. Kids don't shower. If you have one washroom and enough room, do a separate shower and tub. It carries a lot of perceived value weight and positions you above the competition.

TIP If you have more than one washroom, it's fine to leave a tub and shower combo in the family washroom and opt for a luxurious oversized shower for the master ensuite. It's the best of both worlds.

3 | Double sinks

SAVE The reality is you're not likely synchronizing teeth-brushing. One is more likely to be using the sink while the other is doing makeup or hair. Two mirrors and ample counter space is a far more valuable combination and it's a more affordable renovation.

SPEND If you have a generous space, by all means double up.

TIP I'm not sure when or how this became a thing but it's comical to see two airplane-sized sinks squashed into a tiny ensuite. If you could fit two but there's not a lot of counterspace as a result, I'd think twice. I'm a big fan of doing a double-wide vanity with one sink pushed to one side. At resale, simply have the realtor list it as a double vanity to keep the perceived value up. ♦



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