

# Five bathroom design dilemmas



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## THE INCOME RENOVATOR

**W**hen embarking on bathroom renovations my client's are typically faced with the same obstacles.

Space is at a premium and knowing when to rework the layout versus adding smart solutions into the existing design can save you time and money.

First things first, at a very basic level know that anything that uses water and a drain can be switched out.

That means a shower can go where a sink previously existed and vice versa. The tricky move is the toilet.

The waste stack can't be relocated through floor joists which means to relocate a toilet you either have to stick to a move within the same joist cavity or know you will have to drop the stack down below the joists and back up to jump into the cavity below your desired location.

Anything is possible but that will leave you with a bulkhead and ceiling repair in the room below.

Understanding these limitations is half the battle. Here are the top five problems my clients encounter and how we solve them.

**1. Heat source.** With space at a premium opting to remove bulky radiators and heat vents can truly make or break the design. In these small spaces you can fully replace traditional heat sources with in-floor heating be it water or electric. Systems now like Nuheat come in easy to install electric pads that are affordable and low-profile. Another great alternative is a heated towel rack. They can replace a traditional radiator functionally and add the luxury of toasty warm towels.

**2. Feels small.** In homes that have multiple washrooms opting to remove the tub and replace it with a frameless glass shower instantly increases the visual scale of the room. Without the vis-

ual barriers the eye reads the shower as an integral part of the room and bammo it's palatial. Another great trick is to opt for a wall-mounted vanity raised off the floor. Akin to the shower trick the eye freely travels beneath the vanity and gives the illusion of more space.

**3. Looks busy.** Small spaces can quickly become visually busy. The key is to opt for a limited number of materials and finishes. Using the same material on the walls and the counters, and carrying the main washroom flooring onto the shower floor creates continuity.

**4. Short on storage.** Storage is always at a premium in washrooms. Adding a cabinet over the toilet is a great option. There are store-bought options and cabinet makers can create custom units or kitchen upper cabinets are the perfect size with the typical toilet area 30" wide.

**5. Window in wet area.** Often the reshuffling of a washroom design leaves you with a window in the wet areas. Clients often presume they can't have a window in

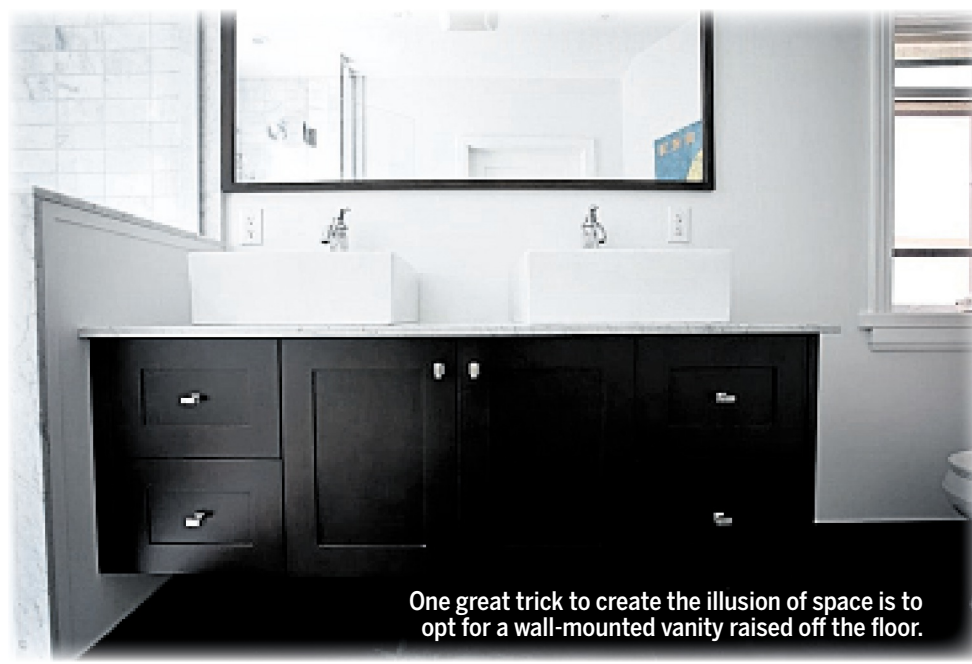


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the shower but if addressed properly that's not true. Use a vinyl window, with frosted glazing. The window surround should be done in a solid material like marble or a composite. You never want flat surfaces created in wet areas where water could pool so make sure the contractor

angles the sills, benches and niches to allow water to drain.

— *Celebrity designer Melissa Davis is well-known for appearances and her creative design work on several HGTV shows. For more information, visit [www.melissadavis.com](http://www.melissadavis.com).*



One great trick to create the illusion of space is to opt for a wall-mounted vanity raised off the floor.



Without the previous visual barriers, the eye reads the shower as an integral part of the room and makes it appear palatial.