

Shower and Shower Equipment

Before you buy, consider the points below

- **Over Bath Shower:** A wall-mounted electric or mixer shower could be fitted over your bath to make washing easier. Grab rails fitted on the wall give some support when getting in and out to shower. See 'Before you Buy Grab Rails'
- **Over bath shower seat:** Shower boards or swivel seats can be fitted over the bath for a seated transfer and for washing under the shower when seated. For safety these must be fitted to manufacturer's instructions. These seats can be removed when not in use but some models can be fixed with wall brackets for safety on unusual shaped baths. Consider how the shower screen will close with seat in position, replacement with a curtain might be easier. Consider the position of the shower head, extra shower head holder can be installed in an appropriate position when seated for a shower.

SHOWER TRAYS, SCREENS, CONTROLS

- **Stepped access trays:** These come in a range of sizes, the smallest tray/cubicle is approximately 800cm x 800cm, available from most standard plumber's merchants. They are fitted on the floor with a step up into the tray. Good balance and mobility is required to step into the tray, consider use of grab rails for further support.
- **Ramped access trays:** These trays are placed on top of the existing flooring, a small ramp provides easy access for the person to walk or wheel in.
- **Shower cubicles:** These are installed as a unit complete with wall panels and shower doors. They usually have a step up into the tray or a ramped entrance. Some are designed to include a toilet to save space. Grab rails and shower seats cannot be fitted retrospectively to the fitted cubicle.
- **Level access trays:** These should be completely level with the floor or have a small ramped access or a step under 1cm. Some trays are fitted on top of the flooring and others fitted into existing flooring and to give a true 'level access', for easy access when walking or using a wheeled shower seat. Level trays can be used to create a 'wet room' or be fitted with doors and screens. Level access bases can fit in the space where a bath stood, using the same drainage site, others require under floor drainage to be installed.
- **Doors/Screens:** Half height fixed screens or half height doors with a curtain avoid water spillage and protect carers from getting wet when assisting with washing. Full height cubicles screens and doors give no access for carer assistance and can be claustrophobic for the user.
- **Shower controls:** Consider a shower with thermostatic control to ensure consistent water temperature, check the shower is not too powerful for the user to tolerate, check the user can see, understand and operate the controls. Lever operated or push button shower controls are available

**For impartial advice from an Occupational Therapist
& information about equipment for independence, suppliers, prices
and to try equipment at our demonstration centre contact:**

The Independent Living Centre 01392 380181 independentlivingcentre.org.uk



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SHOWER SEATS

Standing to have a shower can be difficult if you have problems with balance or breathlessness. Check weight limit on seat and tray. Check the seat and seated person will fit into the cubicle with the doors closed. An extra shower head holder can be installed in an appropriate position for a seated shower. Shower seats must be made from non corrodible materials.

- **Free Standing Shower Seats:** These can be height adjustable with rubber feet that are safe to use on ceramic and plastic trays that have been installed correctly. Some have a seat cut out which also makes washing easier. Some have backrest and armrests which are good for seating confidence but may restrict movement when washing. Shower perching stools have a sloped seat and should be adjusted to ensure the person can perch comfortably taking weight through their legs with feet firmly on the floor. This perched position is easier for standing and for washing the groin area. The small footprint and perched position makes the perching stool ideal for small cubicles. If sitting balance is a problem or stability of ankle, knee or hip makes this perched position unstable, then a flat seat with armrest and back rest would give better support. Flat seats may only fit in a larger shower tray.
- **Wall Mounted Shower seats:** These are fixed to the wall of the shower area on wall brackets and can be folded against the wall when not in use. Must be fitted by a qualified installer. The seat can be bulky when folded. Some have fold down legs for greater security. The seat height will be fixed so that the user's feet are flat on the floor when seated and high enough for standing easily from the seat. Some have backrest and armrests.
- **Wheeled Shower seats:** These can be self propelled with large wheels or attendant propelled with small wheels, for use to wash in a level access shower tray. Check there is enough space to manoeuvre the chair into position; in the bathroom and through doors and corridors. Shower seats may have; drainage holes, cut outs for washing or for use over the toilet as well as removable or foldaway armrests and footrests. If sitting balance is poor then harnesses or lateral supports are available and some models will 'tilt-in-space' to assist to maintain a sitting position.

Grants: The Disabled facilities Grant (DFG) is a means tested grant that may be available for shower installations in owner occupied and housing association properties. Care Direct (0345 1551 007) can advise if you are eligible for an assessment of your need. The amount of assistance offered can vary from 0-100% of the cost. (Parents of children with disabilities are not means tested) Charity grants may be available to assist with the cost of shower installation and these are usually means tested.

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