



Make Your Bathroom a Sanctuary

Most women would enjoy a trip to a spa more than almost anything else...it could be considered a 'time out' for mommy, a place to be pampered, or a time to rejuvenate without the demands of our daily routine. Spa environments relax us because they appeal to all of our senses...the sound of running water and relaxing music, the smells of the lotions and potions, the feel of massage and bubbling water on our skin, the soothing sight of the muted colors and natural décor, and the taste of mineral waters and fresh fruit.

Most of our bathrooms seem to have nothing in common with a spa, but I believe all of them could be improved to give us a place to relax at the end of the day.

So...I'm envisioning the functional bathroom of a young mother, whose tub is constantly filled with bath toys and baby shampoo, whose countertop has piles of diapers and ointment, and whose toilet paper is often unrolled onto a heap on the floor. A relaxing bathroom, she cannot imagine.

With some storage ideas, a little clutter control, and some cosmetic changes, even this family bathroom has the potential to be a sanctuary for mom at the end of the day!

A 'sanctuary' is defined as "a place of refuge or protection". In order to fulfill that definition, a bathroom must be soothing to the senses and provide relaxation. What changes could this young mother make in her bathroom so that it might become more spa-like? We could all benefit from some attention paid to this often most neglected room of our home.

Containers will be needed for the family's toys and toiletry items. Mesh bags are available to store bath toys, and when not in use they can be hung on the faucet to drip dry. Caddies are also available to hang from the shower head to hold several bottles of shampoo, soap and a razor, and toiletries should be pared down to just a few of these items for everyday use. Other less-used items can be stored under the counter, in a linen closet, or medicine cabinet, or in a free standing dresser or cabinet, if the bathroom is large enough. A hook can be hung on the inside of the door for additional storage. The bathroom counter should be kept as clear as possible for a clean look.

We often hang on to toiletry items and cosmetic products for much too long, thinking we will use them 'someday' or remembering how much we paid for them. Face it: if you

haven't used it yet, you're probably not going to. We generally use the products we're familiar with, so throw the others out before they expire and enjoy the extra space and freedom that results from only having what you need in the bathroom. (Prescription and over-the-counter medications should not be stored in a bathroom, as the humidity is detrimental to its contents. A linen or kitchen cabinet may be more appropriate.)

Now that the clutter is gone, the bathroom needs a good cleaning. Removing the old glass shower door and replacing it with a simple shower curtain is an easy improvement that takes a little muscle and time, but is well worth the effort. A beautiful fabric can be lined with a plastic liner, and will not only add color and texture to the slick feel of the bathroom, but also give the tub a more open feeling as you bathe. Add warmth and color with a rug that covers at least half of the floor.

The bathroom can be accented with framed art, fresh towels, and countertop accessories such as a decorative liquid soap bottle, room spray, fresh flowers or potpourri. Common bathroom motifs such as the sea or the garden can be an inspirational starting point.

Spa décor is generally simple and clean, both in color and design, which is what helps to create the 'calm' feel. A collection of soaps and bath salts placed in clear glass jars or pretty baskets, as well as a bath pillow and reading tray further contribute to the task at hand: having a place in your home to spend some quiet time alone each day. A stool or small table next to the tub, and some scented candles will complete the room.

As an interior redesigner, I never cease to be amazed at how some planning, organizing and rearranging can make all the difference in a room...and usually, in the life of the person enjoying it. Treat yourself to a bathroom sanctuary of your own!

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