

5 Things to Know Before Remodeling Your Shower

Your shower door is likely the last item that will be installed to complete your bathroom remodel, but it should be one of the **first** things you plan for, even starting in the design phase. Planning and living through a remodel can be daunting and even exhausting, but we're here to help. At Affordable Frameless, we've helped with thousands of remodels and know exactly what to look for when designing your dream shower.

Whether this is your first bathroom remodel, or you've redone a few showers over the years, having an experienced guide on your side can put your mind at ease, helping you to avoid some of the pitfalls inherent with these projects. There are many small details that can end up making a big difference in how your new shower turns out. We've picked the most impactful factors to be aware of when designing your new shower, and we're going to dive into them right here.

These are listed in the order you would typically address them during your remodel

Toilet and Vanity/Obstructions

In most remodels, the square footage of the bathroom won't get bigger. So, while you might not be able to make major changes to the space, it's important to think about how the size of the room and amenities in the bathroom will affect the choices you have when it comes to the shower door.

Is there a toilet or vanity next to or near the shower? If you're planning to install a swinging shower door, it will have to be designed so it doesn't come into contact with either the toilet or vanity.

Are you planning to mount a towel bar or robe hooks near the shower entrance? A swinging door won't be able to open fully if these are placed on the wall that the door opens against.

Considering the type of shower door you prefer will help you decide how best to format the bathroom to accommodate a door you can be happy with. If you're planning on purchasing a swinging or pivoting door, for example, obstructions immediately surrounding the shower could make it less than ideal or even impossible to use this type of door.

Shower Head/Valve location

This item has more to do with water than anything else- will you get wet when you turn the shower on, and will you end up with a puddle of water outside your shower? Considering where the shower head is currently located can help you determine if a potentially expensive plumbing project is necessary to include in your budget, or if some changes to the shower door might be needed.

You will want to avoid a design where the shower head is pointed directly at the shower door. This could result in excessive water leakage and make it difficult to turn on the shower without getting hit with water before you're ready to get wet.

Some contractors and designers have decided to "split" the plumbing; this is where the water valve is in a different location than the showerhead. This can be a useful solution in many cases, but one example

would be with a larger shower where the showerhead has been placed far from the shower entry; instead of needing to walk all the way into the shower to turn the water on, placing the valve near the entry would make it easy to get the warm water going.

Tile and Deco Borders

Creative and unique wall designs can provide lovely character and charm to a new shower. But these same designs can pose a challenge when trying to mount a frameless glass door. Pencil linings, deco borders, or a bullnose could all increase the cost of a glass door, or even eliminate it as an option altogether. The specific requirements for many glass door systems often call for flat, smooth mounting surfaces with no obtrusions. Custom shower glass can be notched to accommodate small pencil borders in some cases, but make sure you will be happy with this type of look.

Tile made of fragile material can also pose an aesthetic risk. Glass tile has long been a popular alternative for backsplashes and niches, but electing to place this material where a door needs to be mounted carries the very real risk of cracking or breaking the tile. If you have fallen in love with the look of a certain glass tile, consider using it on the interior shower wall and choosing a porcelain or marble surround or border where the door is to be mounted. This can save you from needing to replace broken tile or staring at a spiderweb crack every time you use your new shower.

Curb and Floor Slope

Perhaps no detail will affect how satisfied you are with your new shower more than this one.

Most walk-in showers will have a dam or curb that you will step over to get into the shower; this is where the shower door will be placed in nearly every design.

The key point for this element of your design is: gravity. We know that water will follow gravity and flow “down-hill”.

Does your floor or curb account for a slope that takes the water toward the shower drain?

If the curb or floor is completely flat or level then the water will sit in that area, not draining away.

If the curb or floor is sloped away from the drain (we call this a negative pitch or backward slope) then water will flow toward the bathroom floor creating a puddle every time that shower is used.

You can imagine the constant cleanup that would be needed in the best case, or expensive water damage in the worst scenario.

Hardware Colors/Bathroom Theme

What will be the overall color scheme of the bathroom? Many designers incorporate one or two contrasting and complementary hardware finishes for a modern, minimalist aesthetic.

A popular example of this is gold hardware with contrasting black accents against a white or lighter colored canvas of tile and wall paint. If this is similar to your vision, one challenge you might already have experienced is finding that not all “gold” is the same. Even hardware colors with the exact same name might vary in tone from different manufacturers. This can mean picking the perfect sink faucet in a beautiful deep tone of satin brass, only to find that the shower valve you ordered comes in a brighter, more yellow tone of the same finish.

This problem can largely be avoided by finding a manufacturer that offers both sink and vanity hardware, along with shower and bathtub hardware. However, companies that make this type of hardware generally do not offer parts for custom frameless shower doors. At this point you might find yourself choosing between a close-but-not-quite color or a contrasting color for your shower door hinges.

As companies such as Kohler, Delta, Moen, and others continue to roll out new hardware colors, it becomes increasingly difficult to match these finishes with your shower door hardware.

So, when choosing a unique hardware finish, you can expect to see slight variance in tone in different parts and especially from different manufacturers. In general, more common finishes of chrome, brushed nickel, and matte black are easier to match. But even with these colors the tone can vary slightly from part to part.

Conclusion

To summarize:

If your budget allows for you to make layout changes to the bathroom, then consider where to place your toilet, vanity, shower head, and shower valve to make your dream shower door a reality.

Make sure the tile material and wall design you choose can accommodate a frameless glass door.

Discuss the floor slope to ensure the water will flow to the drain.

And finally, check if the colors you want are available for the shower door hardware.

As you can see, there are so many details to consider when remodeling your bathroom. Yes, this requires significant planning and perhaps the help of a professional designer or contractor, but taking the time to plan for these before you get started can save you valuable time and money. By following these tips, you can avoid the common pitfalls of bathroom remodeling and end up with the shower of your dreams.

Call us today to speak with a shower door expert about your remodel. We offer no-cost on-site consultations Monday through Friday.