

Choosing Your Ideal Bath

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Cast Iron Baths

The weight of a cast iron bath is approximately 350lbs. Depending on where you live they can be difficult to transport, especially if your bathroom is upstairs or if there are any tight corners and doorways in your property. They do have their benefits however. When compared to acrylic baths, for example, they are quieter when filling up with water, retain the heat of the water for longer and are much more durable. They have a more robust feel to them and don't feel as "spongy" as their acrylic counterparts.

Plastic (Acrylic, Fibreglass) Baths

Although it is common knowledge that fibreglass is used in boat manufacturing it is also used for making baths. Fibreglass baths have a gel coating which provides strength while keeping them light in weight. Partly because they are easy to manufacture they are cheaper than cast iron baths. However, because of their thinness they are easily scratched, especially if strong abrasive cleaning solutions are used. Stronger cleaning solutions also affect the colour of the bath which, over time, would appear faded.

How Baths Are Made

In the manufacturing process several layers of fibreglass are moulded together as a support layer then it is given a spray coating of a special gel. To give improved strength other materials such as foam, wood or corrugated paper are used. Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) is sometimes used as a more cost effective alternative to acrylic. The downside to this is that it is softer than acrylic. On a more positive note however, scratches can be eliminated by sanding. Also it not prone to colour fading.

Another process in bath manufacturing it is also worth being aware of is injection moulding. Here liquid plastic is injected into the bath mould. Once it has cooled down it is withdrawn. Injection moulded baths do not have the same rigidity as, for example, cast iron baths and they dull rapidly.

Plastic baths have the problem of being "spongy" and flexible. This is the case whether they are injection moulded or laminated (gel coated). Obviously the more layers of fibreglass or reinforcing used bumps up the price. A good idea when installing a plastic bath is to position a small amount of cement under the bath to give more stability.

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