

## Shower Enclosures Versus Shower Curtains

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If your shower is at one end of your bath you may have a shower curtain fitted to prevent the bathroom floor from getting wet. Shower curtains do have their drawbacks however. A shower enclosure or shower screen is a good alternative to a curtain. They look more stylish, are easy to clean, relatively easy to install, less expensive than you might think, and very versatile. Shower screens are made from toughened safety glass and come in a variety of patterns and shapes, such as rectangular or with rounded corners, and can fit into almost any size and shape of bathroom.

### **Shower Curtains - Disadvantages**

Shower curtains must be used in conjunction with a bath and can only be put in place with a curtain rail or rod which is attached to bathroom walls and sometimes the ceiling. Shower curtains are prone to mildew - a fungus which thrives in warm and humid conditions such as bathrooms - as they are not easy to clean. They must be taken down and machine or hand washed. A mildewed shower curtain not only looks and smells unpleasant, it can be a health risk too. They also have the tendency to billow inwards and stick to your body.

### **The Solution - Install a Shower Enclosure!**

Unlike shower curtains, a shower enclosure can be fitted either in a bath scenario or on its own. Your bathroom will look so much more attractive if you have a shower door or gleaming free-standing shower enclosure. It will be much lower in maintenance too. Unlike a shower curtain which has to be taken down to be cleaned, shower screens and enclosures can be cleaned in their original position with a quick spray of surface cleaner and an easy wipe down. Some shower enclosure doors clip out and can be removed for cleaning. Another advantage to shower enclosures and doors is that they allow more light to permeate the bathroom making it feel more spacious. Shower curtains are less reflective and give the appearance of taking up more space.

### **Bathroom Size and Space**

Don't worry if space is an issue in your bathroom. If you have a small bathroom and want to keep valuable space a shower enclosure takes up considerably less room than a bath. The floor area of a shower tray or enclosure can be under 1 metre which is still plenty of space in which to enjoy your shower. There are a variety of shower doors such as pivot and bi-fold. Or if you have a spare corner, alcove or recess a good solution would be to install a quadrant enclosure or sliding shower door.

### **Installation**

Installation of shower screens is easy as they fit directly onto the wall at the end of the bath with a couple of screws. It's like putting up a vertical shelf. Shower enclosures however, are attached to floor standing shower trays which are normally made from a stone-resin mix or composite plastic. The tray must be absolutely level so that the enclosure itself sits straight and can be properly attached to the wall. If you don't already have a waste outlet in position, contact a plumber who will advise and install one. Once adjusted, the tray should be sealed with silicon sealant. If you are fitting a shower enclosure directly onto a bare wall make sure that the sealant or waterproof adhesive doesn't hamper tiling. Tiles or appropriate cladding must be in place to protect your walls and shower tray foundation from water damage. If walls are uneven shower enclosures can be adjusted to hug uneven walls preventing leaks. Some DIY experience is useful if you want to install your shower enclosure yourself, but if in doubt contact a plumber.

### **Cleaning and Maintenance**

Keeping your shower enclosure sparkling clean needn't be the toil some people say it is. The following few simple steps are much quicker and easier than taking down a curtain and putting it into the washing machine or giving it a

hand wash. After every shower wipe down the wall tiles and enclosure doors with a towel. To prevent mildew, spray down with anti-mould and mildew spray then leave the door open slightly open to allow air to circulate.

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