



THE MALE ROOM

Our **Top 10** ways to turn
your bathroom into a place
for the boys BY DINA SANTORELLI

GUY FRIENDS OF MINE TELL ME THAT SO much has been written about the bathroom and women – how to decorate it for them, how it's a haven for them – that you would think men never had to heed nature's call. Men need to soak, steam and pamper just like their Y-chromosome-lacking counterparts, and the trend toward high-tech, rather than frou-frou, accessorization has made the bathroom all the more of a male room and not just a place for feminine fussing. Here are our Top 10 ways, none of which have to do with valances or soap dishes, to make your bathroom better suited to your needs. >>



Steam showers are an especially great idea if you're an athlete and need to loosen your muscles.



1. STEAM SHOWER

One of the oldest healing remedies in the world, steam baths have been used for centuries to promote health and vitality. After a long day of chopping wood or deleting e-mails, the rich moisture of steam showers relieves muscle tension and joint fatigue, and it reduces stress and cleanses skin. A steam shower can be added wherever you like, and many steam shower units are equipped with a radio and telephone, a remote control, and connections for your CD player. They run from about \$2,000 to \$5,000, depending upon style and components.



Make sure your jets are installed so they hit in the exact spots you need them to.

2. JET SHOWER

If you don't want to install a full-fledged steam shower in your bathroom, a multiple-jet shower offers an economical and powerful showering experience. Functioning much like whirlpools, which push water through water, jet showers propel water through air. There are units, such as those from GROHE, Jacuzzi or Delta, that can be retrofitted to nearly any shower enclosure and require little more than a connection to the hot and cold water supplies and an attachment to the shower wall using two screw-in anchor points. Generally, prices depend on the features, sophistication level and customization of the multi-jet shower system and its components.

Towel warmers are also handy for drying towels that might still be wet for a later-the-same-day shower.



3. TOWEL WARMER

Imagine reaching outside a cozy, steamy shower and grasping a warm towel to wrap around yourself before you step into your comparatively cooler bathroom. Towel warmers, which are also great for drying pool towels and bathing suits in the summertime, range from \$70 to more than \$2,000. They come in a variety of colors, are available in free-standing or wall-mounted units that are hardwired or plugged in, and may come with a timer. >>



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Even if you have heated floors, be sure to keep bathmats around to prevent tracking water.

4. HEATED FLOOR TILE

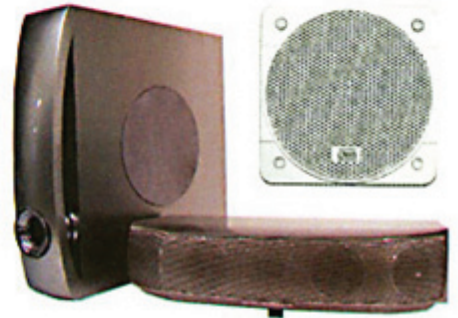
Walk on virtual sunshine by installing heated floor tiles into your bathroom. Such floors can be energy-efficient, reportedly costing just 5 to 15 cents a day in electricity, and can be installed in cement under ceramic tiles and stone floors by a local tile contractor, allowing heat to radiate up through the tiles and throughout your bathroom.

5. FIREPLACE

Soaking in a hot tub in front of a glowing fireplace isn't just for vacationers. A fireplace can be installed in a corner or flat wall of your bathroom, and there are a variety of styles, such as brick and stone; electric fireplaces have a very realistic flame and feature hand-carved logs that also resemble the real thing.

6. HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Remember when it was a novelty to listen to the radio during a shower? Today, homeowners are installing mini-entertainment centers into their bathrooms that consist of televisions, hi-fi equipment and more. There are televisions made specifically for wet environments that can be installed into a flat wall and feature heated screens for clear, condensation-free viewing, replete with 90-degree >>





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wide-angle viewing and a waterproof remote control.

7. FOGLESS MIRROR

As my guy friends also tell me, it is an absolute luxury to shave in the shower or bath, because the hot steam softens your beard, making it easy to shave. Even better, cleanup is a breeze because there's no sink to wipe afterward. There are electrical bathroom mirror defoggers with a very thin heater that adheres to the back of a mirror you already have and is wired to the same power supply as a bathroom light fixture, or there are fogless mirrors made specifically for the shower.

8. LINEN CLOSET

Do you really need to see all the money that you've spent on bath and hand towels, or toilet paper and cleaning supplies? Hide it all within a linen closet or storage cabinet, preferably one with a door. Of all the bath accessorization there is, this one may prove to be the most therapeutic of all.

9. PERSONALIZED WALL DÉCOR

There's a myth that men left to their own devices will keep walls bare, but the truth

is most bathroom wall décor is traditionally inspired and may not appeal to men's tastes. In lieu of flowery arrangements and seaside photos, take the time to decorate your bathroom with items that please you: perhaps movie posters, cartoon cells, sports memorabilia or even items reminiscent of your favorite travel destinations or hobbies. Choose wallpaper with a white or light background, which will give the illusion of a more open space and also make your chosen wall décor stand out.

10. BOOK SHELF / MAGAZINE RACK

They call the bathroom the library, don't they? It's no secret that some people like to take their time and wouldn't mind flipping through a few issues of their favorite home-improvement magazine. A good idea is to place the shelf or rack away from the tub and bath area, which keeps page soggy to a minimum. ▲

