How-To-Buy Guide for Universal Design

By Gray Uhl
Brand Education Director
American Standard
Welcome to the How-to-Buy Guide for Universal Design in Bathrooms

The concept of “universal design” in the bathroom means just that: designing a bathroom that all age groups and all mobility levels can successfully access.

Taller toilets, higher sinks, non-twist faucet handles — they’re all helpful features that can be incorporated into a bathroom remodel or new construction. Plus, the breadth of traditional, transitional and modern design styles in bathroom faucet and fixture collections offer something sure to fit very bathroom decor.

We’ll give you hints on additional, low-cost ways to help make the bathroom safer and physically easier to navigate for multi-generations, from Junior to Grandma. Not everything requires replacement of an existing fixture.

American Standard also offers bathing and showering options especially suited to senior and those with mobility difficulties. Our walk-in bathtubs and seated showers are an ideal solution to provide bathing with dignity and ease.

Let us tell you all about the options that exist to make any home reflect universal design traits. Click on the topics below to read more about a specific topic:

- Universal Design: toilets, sinks, faucets – page 2-3
- Universal Design: water temperature, lighting, secure environment, vision – page 3
- Basic, better and best bathroom faucets – page 4
- Basic, better and best Right Height toilets – page 5
- Walk-in bathtubs – page 6-7
- Quick Drain feature on walk-in bathtubs – page 7
- Basic, better and best walk-in bathtub models – page 7
- Accessible seated showers – pages 8 - 9
- Basic, better and best accessible showers and baths – page 10

Once you’ve upgraded your bathroom to provide accessibility across generations, we’d love to see the finished result. Please follow us on Facebook or Pinterest, or share your images on Houzz.

Good luck and let’s get started!

Gray Uhl
Brand Education Director
American Standard
Guide to Universal Design

As baby boomers enjoy retirement, the idea of “aging in place” becomes more realistic. That is, making adaptations to their current home so that it is safer and physically more accessible as they age. Plus, as more homes become multi-generational with seniors moving in with adult children and their families, there are new trends dominating home remodeling, especially in the bathroom.

That's where the prevalent concept of “universal design” comes into play, accommodating the needs of all age groups and mobility levels. A bit of bathroom remodeling work focused on universal design can cost less than you might think.

The following tips will help create a bathroom that will look great and work wonderfully for you and your loved ones well into the future.

Try a taller toilet. Standard toilets have a bowl height of about 14 to 15 inches. Universal design models are a taller 16 to 17 inches high, making sitting down and getting back up less stressful on the body. These taller toilets are also ADA-compliant.

To read more about American Standard Right Height toilets that meet universal design guidelines, click here.

Raise the bathroom sink. Standard sink height is about 30 inches. Taller sinks, like stylish pedestal sinks, offer a more comfortable 36 inch height, requiring less bending.

To learn more about American Standard sinks and vanities that are a comfortable height for aging in place, click here.

Replace older faucets. Conventional two-knob twist faucets can be difficult to manage for people with arthritis or decreased flexibility of the hands. Lever style faucets and single handle faucets are both alternatives for convenient ease of use. Check for ADA-compliant faucets for optimum usability.

Click here to view the options for selecting American Standard bathroom faucets that offer these features.
Limit the hot water. For single handle faucets, be sure to ask for models that have a hot limit safety stop. This will restrict how far the handle can be pushed toward the hot side. Same thing goes for showers: purchase those with a thermostatic mixing valve that allows the temperature to be preselected. Both these choices will help prevent scalding.

American Standard offers details on making the proper shower faucet choices, click here to read more.

Look at lighting. Bathroom lighting should provide ample illumination while minimizing glare and shadows that can hinder depth perception. Invest in both overhead lighting and task lighting in areas where you groom. Waterproof lighting over showers and bath tubs can enhance visibility and safety when climbing in or out of bathing areas.

Natural light can also boost safety and mood. Consider installing a skylight (tubular skylights can bring natural light to lower level bathrooms) or replacing traditional window panes with options that provide privacy without blocking light, such as glass blocks or frosted glass.

Secure the environment. To minimize the risk of falls, install grab bars in showers, above bathtubs, and around the toilet to help provide stability.

Remove area rugs that may present a tripping threat in the main part of the bathroom.

Consider replacing slick surfaces like smooth ceramic tile with slip-resistant flooring that provides a gripping surface, such as textured vinyl or tile.

Make it easy on the eyes. High-gloss paints and tiles can produce an uncomfortable glare, so introduce matte finishes for better clarity. Choosing wall and floor colors or patterns that contrast is another good way to increase visual perception of space. It’s a help to those with vision difficulties as they move around the bathroom.
Our Recommendations for Single Handle Bathroom Faucets

### SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE BATHROOM RECOMMENDATIONS

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Our Recommendations for Two Handle Bathroom Faucets

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## Our Recommendations for Right Height Toilets

### Safe and Accessible Bathroom Recommendations

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<td><img src="image2" alt="Champion PRO Right Height Elongated Two-Piece Toilet" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Boulevard FloWise Right Height Elongated One-Piece Toilet" /></td>
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- **Cadet PRO Right Height Elongated Two-Piece Toilet**
- **Champion PRO Right Height Elongated Two-Piece Toilet**
- **Boulevard FloWise Right Height Elongated One-Piece Toilet**
Walk-In Bathtubs

A great option for adults that may be facing mobility issues is an easy to access walk-in bathtub. Whether it be simple aging, or immobility from an injury or disability, getting in and out of a standard bathtub can be difficult, and dangerous. It has been estimated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission that, on average, over 350 Americans suffer bathtub or shower-related injuries every day.

Click here for a video about the various options available with walk-in bathtubs.

American Standard walk-in bathtubs are designed so that everyone can enjoy a warm, fully-immersive bath in safety and comfort.

View a video on selecting a walk-in bath or seated shower, click here.

Whether you wish to accommodate family members with mobility issues, or if you are planning to age in place in comfort yourself, adding a walk-in bath to your home can be an important and worthwhile investment.

Learn more about mobility with a walk-in bath by viewing this video, click here.

The tubs include a comfortable chair-height, built-in seat and a color-matched grab bar for added security.

Find out about the many safety features of a walk-in bath, click here for video.
A special **Quick Drain** feature incorporates a powerful pump that removes water in less than two minutes, so you can exit the tub without waiting a long time.

*To see a video of the Quick Drain in action, click here.*

Walk-in bathtubs come in several convenient sizes and can be installed in the space of a regular bathtub – even under a window.

Luxury options like whirlpool, air spa, and combo massage systems are available in American Standard walk-in bath models.

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**Our Recommendations for Walk-In Bathtubs**

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Seated Showers

If you want to incorporate an accessible bathing solution into your bathroom remodel, but prefer showering over a long soak in the tub, then a seated shower might be right for you.

Installing a shower base with a durable, molded seat offers a variety of benefits over temporary removable benches. These seats are a comfortable chair height and allow the user to feel more secure than on a narrow, moveable bench.

Also, many traditional showers and tubs have a higher threshold than the seated shower, making it more difficult for users with reduced mobility to get in and out of the shower area.
Materials
Most seated shower systems are constructed of durable, glossy cast acrylic, which is a popular material because it is so easy to mold in armrests and other important detailing.

Size
You can certainly find a seated shower that will install directly in the space of a standard 5 foot alcove tub. The American Standard seated shower measures 60” wide x 30” deep x 37” high.

Features
- One-Piece, Highly Durable and Luxurious Cast Acrylic Construction
- Wide Full-Size, Chair Height Seat
- Secure, Built-In Armrest and Convenient Accessory Ledge
- Strong, Free Standing Metal Support Frame with Five Leveling Feet

Drain Configuration
Choose a right or left hand drain configuration to be sure the drain is installed directly under the showerhead.

Hints
Look for a seated shower that offers:
- A full-size seating area with a wrap around grab bar that will be comfortable and safe to use
- A seat with a recessed front will make standing and sitting easy
- A place to store soaps and shampoos within reach of the seating area
- A low threshold of no more than 3-inches.

View a video on selecting a seated shower or walk-in bath, click here.
# Safe and Accessible Bathroom Recommendations

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**Basic**: Acrylic Seated Safety Shower

**Better**: Gelcoat Walk-in Whirlpool

**Best**: Acrylic Walk-in Whirlpool