

## **How To Buy A New Bathtub**

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Cast iron is the most durable and longest-lasting type of bathtub you can buy, and vintage cast iron tubs are very popular. However, if a cast iron tub is too cumbersome to get to a second-floor bathroom in your home, an enameled steel tub is the next best thing. How long before you need to replace a bathtub will depend on how well it's cared for and whether it's reglazed during its lifetime, which can add ten or 15 years to the life of a tub. A fiberglass tub will last from ten to 15 years. An enameled steel tub can last ten to 30 years, and a cast iron tub can survive as long as the house it's in. When it comes to bathtubs, there are quite a few styles to accommodate just about any bathroom with each style placing an emphasis on two key factors: **space** and **material**. The amount of space you have will largely influence what style is right for you while you may be inclined to an oval shaped freestanding bathtub, you might only have space enough for a round bathtub. Contrary to the more classic design of the clawfoot is the oval bathtub. These bathtubs are round in shape and symmetrical, quite similar to a water basin. Quite popular in apartments or smaller homes where space is a premium, these bathtubs have a more modern look that contrasts well against the sharper corners and edges of the rest of your bathroom. Similar to an alcove, but much larger is the corner tub. These are bathtubs that are much wider than the typical alcove bathtub, but the space they fill is similar. Alcove bathtubs are usually installed adjacent to three connecting walls, usually a window. More for relaxation and therapy, these bathtubs are more similar to hot tubs than normal tubs. A walk-in bathtub is a bathtub that is fitted to allow the user to walk in and sit down without fear of slipping. There are grooves and notches along the insides of the tub to provide walking grip and generally there is also hand holds to assist balance and stability. These are most prominent in homes that have elderly folk as these will allow them to bathe without further assistance. A whirlpool tub is a bathtub that houses self-contained jets. These jets are either air or water jets, but their primary function is to massage the user for both relaxation and health purposes. Air jet whirlpools contain dozens of small jets that pump warm air through to create air bubbles while water jet whirlpool have fewer but larger jets that push water at high speeds. The primary advantage of a whirlpool tub is that it creates a deeper massage sensation than any other tub on the market. An air tub is a bathtub that is equipped with multiple small jets that blow heated air into the bath water to create a massaging sensation. Although they are quite similar to water whirlpool baths, air tubs use their jets to create a bubbling sensation rather than a deep, massaging sensation. There are two factors in choosing the right material for your bathtub, namely price and comfort. Every material feels different to the touch, so you should test out which is the most comfortable to you as you will be spending a significant time in your bathtub and your comfort is important to enjoy it. However, the most comfortable material may also be quite pricey and quite a tad bit heavier, so you should do research on what your bathroom can handle before purchasing. The cheapest bathtub material, fiberglass is constructed from reinforced plastic sheets which are eventually molded into the shape of a bathtub. The material is quite durable although prone to chipping from heavy impacts and it carries the unfortunate trait of being porous. Porous meaning it will absorb water regularly, eventually resulting in the material warping over time and becoming increasingly unstable. Porcelain is constructed by layering cast iron or stamped steel with a layer of porcelain enamel-a mixture of powdered glass and substrate heated into a durable coating. As a result, these bathtubs are quite durable, and are non-porous, making it so they will not warp or deteriorate over time. The porcelain coating, however, is quite delicate to heavy impacts, so take care not to drop anything on it or you will leave some very noticeable blemishes on its surface. Similar to fiberglass, acrylic is formed by taking a solid sheet of petrochemicals, stabilizers, resin and appropriate dye, heating it then molding the result into a bathtub shape which is then reinforced with fiberglass. Lightweight and available in many styles and sizes, acrylic is a popular choice for both drop-in and freestanding bathtubs. Although it looks and feels quite similar to fiberglass, the material is non-porous, making its durability much higher than fiberglass. It is also resistant to chipping and heavy impacts, though typically you should still refrain from throwing things at your bathtub. Ceramic bathtubs are formed by molding numerous ceramic tiles together until it hardens. The benefit of this method of construction is that ceramic is quite similar to clay, meaning it comes in many different styles and

sizes, more than any material on the market. The drawback to this is that ceramic must be continually maintained or it will eventually deteriorate and crumble. Constructed from pure copper, copper bathtubs are custom made and are the cusp of what is considered a luxury bathtub. This material is incredibly durable, holds heat, requires absolutely no additional maintenance other than consistent water use and is aesthetically brilliant. It is also, 2-3x more expensive than any bathtub material on the market, putting you down an average price tag of \$2,000. Similar to copper, wood is a bathtub material that is very rustic and aesthetically pleasing. Constructed from natural wood then sealed with water resistant wax, these bathtubs are also highly priced at around \$2,000. The wax will hold for several years, but over time these bathtubs will tend to break down with consistent use and are not seen as a lasting investment compared to the similarly priced copper bathtubs. Another important consideration is the size of your bathtub. Size is an important factor as your home may not need a larger bathtub if a smaller bathtub size will do. Generally, if your home can support it and you have the space for it, a larger tub is recommended. In the case of freestanding and corner bathtubs, if you have the requisite space, then by all means, choose those styles. But, if your space is more limited, alcove, drop-in, and soaking might be more suitable for you. While it looks visually more appealing, a larger bathtub will also require a heftier water bill as it will require more water to fill completely compared to a smaller size. Smaller sizes also come in more useful variants like the Japanese soaking style, which allows you to sit comfortably and soak. The counter to this is that smaller bathtubs are also not for everyone and some may feel the more compact size of them to be cramped compared to a large sized tub. To measure out your home and discover which size is more appropriate for your bathroom, you may look at our guide [here](#). When purchasing a tub, weight is a crucial factor to consider. Similar to size, the weight of your tub will determine where you can place your bathtub. If the material of the tub is too heavy, your floor and house may not be able to support it when it is filled with water. This can be tricky as some of the more quality materials such as Cast Iron, Natural Stone and Copper are highly desirable, but are often too heavy for many homes. However, while it may be easy to place anywhere, these bathtubs tend to be the largest in size and, depending on the material used, these also tend to be the heaviest overall. Their design means they hold a large volume of water weight, so be careful that your floor can handle the additional weight. Drop in bathtubs are perhaps the easiest to install compared to other bathtubs on the market. Their namesake says it all-they drop in. These bathtubs are usually placed in an ingress or carved out space, which you simply need to connect the requisite plumbing before placing it down. Perhaps the most difficult to install by yourself, corner bathtubs have a few more moving parts compared to other bathtubs on the market. Their wider design also means this type of bathtub will need a larger area to be installed compared to any other bathtub and you may need additional help placing it. Corner bathtubs also have additional water settings that you perhaps may need to hire a professional to sort out if you are unfamiliar with the plumbing. As discussed previously, the price for a bathtub is determined by the quality of the material used and your style choice. As a general rule, smaller bathtubs will always be cheaper than larger ones, but that in no way means there is a quality difference between a larger and smaller bathtub. The material is the primary concern here. As a general average, a normal freestanding bathtub is roughly anywhere from \$500-2000 depending on the cost of the material used. Fiberglass is the cheapest, therefore the price range runs on average anywhere from \$200-500. Acrylic is next, with a more normalized price range which is around \$500 starting. Porcelain carries a wider spectrum with some starting bathtubs around \$300, but some can run up to \$1500. Generally, fiberglass, acrylic, and porcelain are seen as more affordable materials on the market with an average price range of \$300-500. Drop-ins are more simplistic, running anywhere from \$300-900, and there is considerably less prep as most of these can be easily installed yourself. Lastly, we have the corner bathtub which is a bit more pricey as these tend to have more features similar to a hot tub. These will typically run at a starting price of about \$700. Another important consideration when buying a new bathtub concerns the people actually using it. A strange statement, but you should consider all the needs of the people using your bathtub. For instance, if you choose a taller bathtub that allows for longer soak sessions, this may

prove problematic for younger children to enter and exit without assistance. This same rule also applies to the elderly.

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