

Designers on SHOWERS

We asked three experts for their advice on the key elements that make a successful walk-in shower



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What type of shower enclosure would you recommend?

My ideal walk-in shower would be quite large, around 2x1m, and would be clad in stone with a seat incorporated into one end. An opaque door instead of clear glass would provide privacy, while a heated towel rail placed conveniently just outside the shower partition means that warm dry towels would always be within easy reach.



For ease of installation, off-the-peg walk-in showers are best, and they will keep the water in the tray. Bespoke showers can be difficult as they involve building your own wall.

The latest walk-in showers use as little framework and as much glass as possible, with low-profile trays that create a seamless environment between the shower and the rest of the bathroom. Walk-in showers usually have an integrated enclosure and tray, which are designed together, and as a result they tend to fit and seal well, reducing the possibility of leaks.

What are the best options for the floor?

Go for a resin tray in the shower enclosure it will feel warm



underfoot, and make sure you add good perimeter drainage so that the user is never standing in water.

Shower trays can be made from marble, acrylics or glass fibre, allowing you to get a luxurious feel in a small space. For large spaces, consider the way your water will flow, and ensure it can run back from the edge of the tray or shower area towards the drain. It's possible to create a completely watertight shower with systems that lie underneath the tray or tiled floor.

Raised trays create dividing lines in bathrooms and make what are usually smallish spaces feel even smaller, so go for an enclosure with a tray that's set flush to the floor: the water runs off a flat panel, which covers the entire shower area, into a concealed drain beneath. The panels come in a range of different materials, including wood and slate, so you can co-ordinate them with your room's decor.

What hi-tech features will enhance a shower room?

Install a 200mm diameter shower head on the wall with six further body jets set either side for a shower that gives you a "no wet hair" option. In a shower that doubles as a steam room, adding a wall-mounted waterfall spout with a cold water supply means you can steam, "plunge" then steam again. Luxurious extras could include fibre-optic lighting in the ceiling for a soft-star effect.

Choose a rain shower head for a relaxed downpour - some types have different power options, such as "summer rain" or "monsoon". There are lots of entertainment options too, such as flat-screen waterproof TVs, which double up as mirrors when not in use. Alternatively, pipe music from a stereo into the room through bathroom speakers. Add low-level mood lighting to enhance the senses.

Electronic systems such as lighting and music can be incorporated into



the initial design. You could also install sauna functions, and bodyjets that fit flush to the shower wall or ceiling. ■

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