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Small bathrooms make it in a big way

Vast bathroom suites, freestanding bath tubs, double washbasins and partitions – most of us dream of a spacious bathroom. The reality, however, is that most bathrooms only have a few square metres at their disposal. The good news: everyone can make more of their bathroom by applying some simple tactics. In a workshop with interior designers and bathroom planners, Laufen Bathrooms drew up a series of simple yet promising tips.

Most small bathrooms have a set floor plan which cannot be changed. In such cases, solutions are required that make the bathroom appear larger and allow greater freedom of movement.

1. Choose large tiles to convey an impression of spaciousness, small tiles produce a cramped look. The following applies in general: choose bright, cool colours for small bathrooms, white and pastel shades are most suitable. But take care not to use too many colours and complicated patterns. Tiles sized from 30 by 30 centimetres upwards are perfect.

2. Mirror surfaces can double the room size visually . Especially effective: apply large, bright tiles to walls up to a height above eye-level and finish with a wooden strip. Then have mirror strips cut to the width of the wall and mount these on top – you will be rewarded by a fantastic view. Another option:

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simulate a door frame using wood strips and fix a mirror into this – thus creating whole new vistas.

Practical tip: Make sure that the real door is not mirrored. This introduces a restless note to the bathroom and ruins the enlargement effect.

3. Dark, poorly lit bathrooms are depressing, and look small and musty. Small bathrooms in old buildings often have no daylight – on the other hand, they generally do have high ceilings. Bathrooms of this kind are ideal for a suspended ceiling with simulated skylight. Simply suspend a wide wooden frame the size of the surface area approx. 25 to 30 centimetres below the ceiling. In the centre, a plexi-glass dome, flanked by four daylight tubes, bathes the surroundings in remarkably convincing "sunlight".

Practical tip: The brighter and more evenly the bathroom is illuminated, the better. Besides lots of daylight tubes, backlit mirrors and cabinets also create atmospheric light accents – and make the bathroom look larger.

4. With slimline, space-saving ceramic items and bathroom furniture, additional space is gained not only in visual terms. Corner variants of bath tubs and washbasins use existing space optimally, short projection washbasins and toilets also require less space while washbasins that can be cut to size can be fitted snugly into every recess. Anyone prepared to dispense entirely with a bath tub, opting instead for a lovely shower

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with extra-flat shower tray and a shower partition made of safety glass, will gain approx. one third more space. "A flexible, practical bathroom furniture system stylishly provides more storage space while giving the bathroom designer a free rein when planning", explains the architect and designer, Jürg Heuberger, who created the modular Open bathroom furniture line for the bathroom specialist, Laufen Bathrooms.

5. Especially where small bathrooms are concerned, it makes sense to consult an experienced tradesman or bathroom planner for more extensive modernisation measures, as planning errors in small bathrooms are not easy to iron out again and, in the majority of cases, swallow up precious space.

Practical tip: Retail showrooms are a good starting point to gain a first impression of the design options available for small bathrooms. Experienced consultants are also on hand in such places to supply additional information.

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