How to Remodel a Bathroom in 10 Days or Less
INTRODUCTION

This guide shares quick tips on how to remodel a bathroom in 10 days or less. The purpose is break each day into steps, share some quick tips, and show you the materials we use.

Not every bathroom is exactly the same. And our guide isn’t meant to show all the details of a bathroom remodel. Ultimately we want to inspire you to take the first step toward your own bathroom renovation.

You might be single with kids, married, helping a friend or family member or starting your own contracting business. Either way we’re here to help you start your project on the right foot.

We’ve included Amazon links to some of the tools so that you can see what they look like. Shop around for the best prices though, sometimes Amazon isn’t the cheapest place.

Our **PRO TIPS** are sprinkled throughout the guide. These are important to remember, so don’t skip them.

We hope our guide helps you with your project. And if you have any questions don’t hesitate to send us an email.

Jeff Patterson  & Steve White
Co-Founders, Bathroom Repair Tutor
DAY 1: Demo

Turn off the water and electricity to the bathroom. This simple step prevents a split pipe or sliced electrical line when you cut through fiberglass tub surrounds.

Take apart all the plumbing fixtures from the tub: tub spout, escutcheon for mixing valve, shower head and shower arm.

A fiberglass shower surround can be easily removed by cutting it into three sections: the back wall, plumbing wall and wall opposite the plumbing.

PRO TIP: Use a reciprocating saw and a carbide tipped blade, e.g. Milwaukee’s 9 inch AX blade…it’s worth every penny.
If you have a tiled wall use a hammer to pound out all the tile. There’s nothing special, just work and brute force. Wear safety glasses and a respirator to protect yourself.

Disconnect the tub plumbing, e.g. the waste overflow from the P-Trap. And now you can remove the tub.

If you have a cast iron tub it will need to be smashed into pieces using a sledge hammer. This is by far the easiest method for cast iron tub removal.

**Day 2: Subfloor Repair**

If you’re quick, you can do this on Day 1. Grab a 4 foot level and check the floor for evenness. Out-of-level bathroom subfloors will adversely effect how the tub drains.
If the floor is way out of level, e.g. more than 1/2 inch, we recommend inspecting the joists. It’s possible the joists were cut for plumbing and need to be reinforced. You can sister new 2x8s or 2x10s to the old joists to reinforce their structural integrity…but check local codes. In the picture below we fixed the joists using 2x8s and Liquid Nails between the old and new joists.

If the subfloor has dry rot, replace it now before adding an isolation membrane like DITRA or DITRA-HEAT. Again, check local code for subfloor requirements and if you’re using DITRA or DITRA-HEAT you’ll want to reference the subfloor requirements.

Visit [Schluter’s website](https://www.schluter.com) where you can get the DITRA and DITRA-HEAT handbooks.
DAY 3: Setting the Tub & Tub Plumbing

Dry fit the new tub and check that it’s level. Once you’re sure it will fit properly go ahead and attach the tub plumbing to the drain.

**PRO TIP:** Use 100% clear silicone for the tub drain and tub waste overflow pipes where they meet the tub. This prevents leaks.

Some local codes require the P-Trap to be glued and not have slip fittings. This is especially true if you don’t have an access panel for the tub or shower plumbing.

Keep this in mind before doing the tub plumbing.
Install the tub to the framing using 2 inch galvanized screws and washers. Steel and cast iron pipes attach to studs via washers and screws. Impact drivers are the best tools for this step.

**PRO TIP:** Pre-drill Acrylic tub lips before screwing them to the studs. This helps prevent cracking the tub. Always check that your tub is level after attaching it to the studs.

We have a great tutorial over on our website that shares step-by-step how to install a Kohler Archer acrylic tub.

Here’s the link

https://www.homerepairtutor.com/how-to-install-a-bathtub/
Measure for the mixing valve location in the stud wall. Typically the tub spout nipple should be 3 to 4 inches above the tub deck and the riser to the mixing valve should be 8 to 18 inches.

The shower head height is a personal preference but 80 inches off the subfloor is a good location.

**PRO TIP:** We like the Delta MultiChoice mixing valve with integral stops because it’s depth can be set with a standard 2x6 in a 2x4 wall. Plus the integral stops allow you to turn the water off at the shower when replacing a cartridge.
Soldering copper pipes to the mixing valve can be done outside the tub. Place the flame of a MAPP torch behind the fitting and feed solder into the joint from the opposite side. Brass takes a bit longer to heat up than copper. Keep that in mind when soldering the mixing valve.

**PRO TIP:** MAPP gas heats brass and copper pipes faster than propane. Just be careful if you have to solder in the stud wall. Having a fire extinguisher nearby is a good idea.
DAY 4: Framing the Shower Niche

Now is the time to frame the stud wall if you want a recessed shower niche. Map out the tile location before setting the height of the niche framing. This prevents poorly placed grout joints in wall tile.

Insulate outside walls using either Roxul or Johns Manville insulation. Roxul is fire resistant until it reaches roughly 2000F. And Johns Manville’s insulation is formaldehyde free. Here’s a link to our Roxul tutorial

https://www.homerepairtutor.com/roxul-insulation/

PRO TIP: You do not need a vapor barrier for certain foam board products like KERDI-BOARD. Read the directions to be sure.
After adding the insulation, install waterproofing boards.

Cement board is the cheapest option but foam boards are easier to install. KERDI-BOARD, Wedi and GoBoard are all fantastic foam board options.

Here’s a link to our KERDI-BOARD tutorial

https://www.homerepairtutor.com/kerdi-board/

**PRO TIP:** Use something like KERDI, RedGard or ARDEX 8+9 to waterproof cement board. Don’t skip this step!! A lot of folks think cement board is waterproof but it is not.
Day 5: Set Tile on Main Shower Wall

Tile the main shower wall first in a tub shower combo. Set the first row of tile on 1/16” or 1/8” thick plastic spacers.

That way, when the tub expands and contracts the tile won’t crack.

Sponge thin-set off the tiles and clean the grout joints with a small brush. This helps keep tiles clean throughout the tiling process.

**PRO TIP:** Tile lippage systems help keep tiles lippage free. [Tuscan SeamClips](https://www.tuscanseamclips.com), [LevTec](https://www.levtec.com) and the [T-Lock system](https://www.t-lock-system.com) are all good. Choose the correct size tile leveling system based on your tile dimensions.
If you’re setting large tiles, e.g. bigger than 12” on one side, back buttering them will improve the bonding performance. You don’t have to back butter tiles all the time but it helps. In addition, the Tile Council of North America recommends 95% of the back of the tile be back buttered in wet areas, e.g. showers.

Use a laser level to set tile perfectly plumb and level. It’s much easier to use a laser level than a pencil or chalk line on the wall.

**PRO TIP:** We like using the Bosch GLL 2 self-leveling cross-line laser and Laser Jamb to set wall tiles. These two tools are very helpful and keep tiles perfectly straight.
Day 6: Tile Remaining Walls

Tile the side walls of the tub shower combo or shower on Day 6. Do the plumbing wall first then the opposite wall.

Use a carbide hole saw to cut small holes in tiles.
Use a 4.5” angle grinder and DeWALT XP 4 or Montolit CGX115 blade to cut a hole for the mixing valve.

**PRO TIP:** Make sure the angle grinder’s RPMS don't exceed those on the XP4 blade. We’ve used a variety of angle grinders but [FEIN’s WSG-7](https://www.homerepairtutor.com/how-to-tile-a-shower-wall/) is affordable and can handle the XP4 blade.

Cut the mixing valve hole outside if using an angle grinder. A lot of dust will be created. Plus, wear safety glasses and a respirator to protect yourself.

Here’s the link to our tutorial on how to tile a plumbing wall

[https://www.homerepairtutor.com/how-to-tile-a-shower-wall/](https://www.homerepairtutor.com/how-to-tile-a-shower-wall/)
DAY 7: Grout Wall Tiles and Add DITRA

Clean the wall tile with a white scrubby.

And remove any remaining thin-set mortar from the grout joints using a carpet knife, painter’s tool or utility knife.
Just be careful not to puncture the waterproofing behind the tile when cleaning the grout joints.

Grout the shower wall tile with a premium product like Bostik’s QuartzLock 2, Mapei’s Keracolor or FA or anything from Ardex.

**PRO TIP:** Sponge the tiles before grouting as this will help the grout float over the tile and into the grout joint.

Use a color matching caulk or silicone sealant for the corners and where the tub meets the tile.

Grouting the shower doesn’t take long when using a pre-mixed grout like Bostik’s QuartzLock 2.
Bathroom subfloors can be waterproofed using DITRA or DITRA-HEAT. We recommend doing this after grouting your shower.

**PRO TIP:** Use Schluter’s ALL-SET to embed the DITRA or DITRA-HEAT into the subfloor. You can also use ALL-SET to set tiles over any Schluter membrane.

Here’s a link to our DITRA tutorial

[https://www.homerepairtutor.com/schluter-ditra/](https://www.homerepairtutor.com/schluter-ditra/)

Here’s a link to our DITRA-HEAT tutorial

If your bathroom is small, the floor can be tiled the same day that the DITRA or DITRA-HEAT is installed.

Again, it helps to use a tile leveling system to get perfectly flat tiles without lippage. Keep in mind that tile leveling systems like T-Lock fine tune the floor tile. Leveling systems are not meant to fix uneven floors.

Most thin-set mortars require 24 hours before grout joints can be grouted.
DAY 8: Paint Walls and Grout the Floor

Bathroom walls can be primed or painted on Day 7. But you can opt to do this step on Day 8.

Sherwin-Williams makes some of the best paints for bathrooms. Their Harmony paint in eggshell is a fantastic option. Harmony contains special properties that inhibit the growth of mold and mildew. Plus, it has a washable surface.

Paint the ceiling first then cut in walls using a 2.5 inch Purdy Clearcut brush.

Once the walls and ceiling are painted it’s time to grout the tile joints.
Some of our favorite grouts for floors include Bostik’s QuartzLock 2 and Mapei’s Flexcolor CQ. Both of these grouts are pre-mixed, have color consistency, and are stain resistant.

Pack grout joints using a rubber float and follow the manufacturer’s directions.

Here’s a link to our Flexcolor CQ tutorial

https://youtu.be/uuFqHERYGdw
DAY 9: The Toilet, Vanity and Accessories

Baseboards, door casings and window trim can be painted on Day 8 and installed on Day 9.

It’s important to get casings and trim installed before installing toilets. Mark the position of the studs on the floor and nail baseboards into the framing.

This simple tip lessens the likelihood of nails from being shot into plumbing.

If there are pipes or electrical lines running through the wall you should protect them using steel plates. Add the plates if you’re redoing the drywall.
**PRO TIP:** Check that the toilet closet flange is even or 1/4” above the finished floor. A closet flange extender ring can be added to the old flange if the height needs to be raised.
Here’s a link to our toilet flange repair tutorial

https://www.homerepairtutor.com/toilet-flange-repair/

American Standard toilets are great. We use them for our rentals, and rarely get calls about clogs or leaks. The Cadet 3 is very affordable and easy to install.

Here’s a link to our toilet installation tutorial

https://www.homerepairtutor.com/american-standard-toilets-vormax/
Add the vanity after the toilet is installed. If the bathroom is small a pedestal sink is a fantastic option. It makes the bathroom look bigger.

**PRO TIP:** Always try to secure a standard vanity or pedestal sink to the studs in the wall.

Here’s a link to our pedestal sink tutorial

https://www.homerepairtutor.com/small-bathroom-makeovers-pedestal-sink-installation/
Add some style to a bathroom by using towel bars that complement the fixtures. Most companies like American Standard, Delta, Moen and Kohler make accessories that match their faucets.

Here’s the link to our tutorial on how to install towel bar and toilet paper holders

https://youtu.be/oKiMAmHQWBc

Use Day 10 to clean up and make minor fixes, like paint touch ups.
What’s Next

Your bathroom remodel may take 10 days or less, or it might be a few months. We believe you can do it yourself and make it look amazing.

Stand up showers or walk-in showers were not in our guide. But they take about the same amount of time as a tub shower combo. If you have any questions just let us know.

Or you can join one of our online courses.

https://www.homerepairtutor.com/course-library/

Many of our members have said our tutorials gave them the courage to tackle their DIY bathroom remodel. And the detailed instructions made it much easier to accomplish the bathroom of their dreams.

Below you’ll find a bonus worksheet for a tub shower combo project. This provides estimates for all the materials.

If you have any questions feel free to email us or reach out via our contact form over on Home Repair Tutor.

Have a great day and we’ll talk to you soon.

Jeff & Steve
# BONUS Tub Shower Combo Materials Worksheet

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<td>Bathtub Plumbing</td>
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<td>Mixing Valve</td>
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<td>Shower Head Kit</td>
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