



## Building Success 101

*Q: Where can I learn more about universal design?*

A: There are increasing numbers of information resources about universal (or accessible) design for residential settings. A good place to begin is with the [Center for Universal Design](#) in Raleigh, N.C. Another is on the NAHB website. Go to [www.nahbrc.org](http://www.nahbrc.org) and type in 'LifeWise Home Project' in the search area.

## Bath Trends: The Royal Treatment

How far the bathroom has come in housing history, from an unheated shack outside to a treasured private retreat. Sure, the basic functions of a bathroom are intact and in place, but in today's master suites, especially, the space has evolved to include a variety of spa-like amenities and luxury features.

As in the kitchen (the other "hot button" room of any house), design professionals and product manufacturers have focused their efforts on the bathroom with an increasing variety of styles, finishes, and features. Consider these current bath trends:

**Shower Power:** Forget about a single showerhead hung from the wall. Today's showers offer multiple, adjustable heads on every wall and from above, with wall-mounted control pads to set and manipulate spray patterns, intensity, and temperature. Some heads, called shower tiles, are set flush to the wall or ceiling to provide a gentle spray, while handheld shower wands allow users the ultimate in water control.

**Tub Time:** Bathtubs are not only getting longer and deeper, and with requisite whirlpool jets, but also can include mood lighting and spillover troughs to create a more relaxing experience. Called "chromatherapy" by one plumbing manufacturer, these tubs feature underwater LED lights that gently change color across a wide spectrum of soft pastels; effervescent bubbling action from multiple underwater ports enhances the soothing effect. Meanwhile, overflow tubs enable a deeper soaking experience without the worry of making a mess.

**Wellness Centers:** In addition to featuring luxury items, bathrooms (especially master baths) are getting larger -- large enough, in some cases, to include in-home spa amenities including massage tables and yoga or dance studios that offer more convenience, privacy, and cleanliness.

**Clothes Care:** Along the same lines as the in-home spa and studio concept is the idea of a home-based laundry center, including personal dry-cleaners and closet-like clothes fresheners and flat-rack dryers in addition to traditional laundry equipment. If the bathroom has the footage, why not install such products to make life easier, cut down on errands, and save a bit of money while attaining a higher level of quality care for your clothes?

**Personal Service:** Master bathrooms have become destinations. As such, they need additional conveniences, including laundry and clothes storage as well as a place to prepare snacks and refreshments. Often

called "morning kitchens," these mini-service areas offer built-in coffee and espresso makers, compact refrigerators, bar sinks, microwave ovens, and perhaps undercounter dishwasher drawers (not to mention adequate cabinet storage) to privately serve the owners as they get ready for work in the morning or wind down at the end of the day.

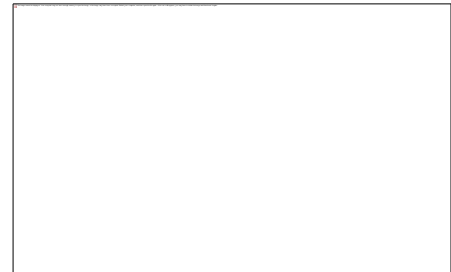
**Universal Access:** Whether to accommodate a temporary injury, a more chronic disability, a young child, or an elderly relative or guest, the concept of universal or accessible design can be easily and affordably achieved in any bathroom without sacrificing style or luxury. Multiple-height vanities, lever-handled faucets, D-shaped cabinet pulls, and zero-threshold showers with built-in seating and handheld heads are just a few design and product ideas that support universal design.

If you or someone you know would like to discuss remodeling your bathrooms to incorporate some of these features please call for a consultation.

Warm regards,

*Richard*

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