



Accessible Basin Design

The Facts

A basin can be designed to suit a standing or seated person and still be an attractive addition to your home.

1. As we age we may experience a decline in our immune system and as a result develop a greater risk of health problems. Daily hygiene and grooming play a crucial role in maintaining health and day to day wellbeing.

2. Easy access to bathing and toiletry facilities is essential to living independently.

3. A basin can be accessible to a seated person or a person in a wheelchair and still be a fashionable part of the bathroom décor.

If you have balance problems or need to sit while performing hygiene and grooming routines or rely on the use of a wheelchair you may face constant daily problems if bathroom fittings are not accessible.

Elements of basin design

When selecting a basin taking into account the following items will ensure that the basin fixture suits you décor and also allows you to sit and complete daily grooming.

Height

An accessible basin needs to be mounted at a height that, when seated, you can reach to operate the taps and also reach into the bottom to release the plug.

A standard basin height is generally 850-900mm above the floor level, however, to suit a seated person or a person in a wheelchair the height of between 770-800mm above the floor level is more suitable. This height may vary depending on your own height; taller people may need a higher basin than shorter people.

When selecting a basin test the height in the showroom if possible to establish a height that will suit you.

Many elements contribute to the accessibility of a basin.

Depth

Not being able to reach the bottom of the basin may not seem to be a problem, particularly with a basin that has a release button for the plug. However, retrieving items from the bottom of the bowl and cleaning the basin can become difficult if you are unable to reach. Select a basin that is not too deep.

Width

The width of the basin is important when trying to operate taps and quickly correct any fluctuations in temperature before being burnt.

If the basin is too wide reaching up over the front edge to the taps at the back may become difficult if you are seated. If you do wish to install a wide basin that may cause an issue consider relocating the taps to a side position.

Clearance under the basin

An accessible basin must have a clear space underneath to allow free and easy access for your legs when seated without obstructions that could cause injury or frustrate use.

A vanity unit with draws or cupboards limits access and may result in limited ability to use the basin independently.

Exposed water pipes under the basin should be located or concealed so they do not create the chance you could burn yourself when seated.

Location of taps

Taps should be located within easy reach. The handle and spout should be within 300mm of the front of the basin. If you have difficulty reaching taps an extended lever handle and longer spout may be the answer.

Where taps are wall mounted their height must be related to the height of the basin and within reach when seated.

Storage

Although an accessible basin requires a clear space underneath and eliminates the ability to have cupboards or draws below the fixture, storage for grooming items and medications etc. is still generally needed close to the basin.

A separate cupboard for the storage of these items can be

installed next to the basin, either freestanding or wall mounted.

Where wall mounted ensure that the unit is mounted at a height where all shelves/drawers are within a range to reduce bending and overstretching.

If in doubt about your own reach range, sit down and measure how far you can reach up, down and in front of yourself and keep these measurements in mind when selecting and installing fittings. Also consider the reach ranges of other users when selecting and positioning fittings.

Consideration when selecting a basin

In summary the main factors determining the accessibility or otherwise of a basin include:

- Height
- Depth
- Width
- Clearance underneath
- Location of taps
- Type of taps
- Obstructions around the basin

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