

**White Paper: Thinking about a walk-in tub? Think again.**

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Walk-in tubs are all the rage these days with various retired media personalities touting them as a “must-have” for every senior citizen. Although they are beneficial for some individuals, they are not the panacea that they are professed to be. Here's why:

**COST**

The total installed cost of these units is higher than advertised. Installed units run approximately \$15,000 on average due to the associated remodeling of the bathroom that is often required. In most cases, a walk-in tub will not add to the resale value of the home.

**LEAD-TIME**

The time from ordering to actual usage ranges from weeks to months depending upon the manufacturer, difficulty of installation, amount of related remodeling/repair required and permitting required.

**ACCESSIBILITY / SAFETY**

Although more accessible than a traditional bath tub, walk-in tubs still require stepping up to gain entry. For folks with gait and mobility issues, entering and exiting still present a challenge. Transferring from a wheelchair is not advised.

**ENJOYMENT**

The ads fail to mention that before you enjoy your bath you must close the door and wait for the tub to fill, and after you finish your bath, you must wait for the tub to drain prior to exiting.

**BETTER OPTIONS**

For most seniors, lower cost, faster, safer and more enjoyable solutions exist.

**1. Bath Bench, Grab Bars & Hand-Held Shower**

These simple enhancements enable those with balance and gait issues and especially those using a walker to achieve an independent, safe and full bathing experience. For a few hundred dollars, the modifications can be made in a couple of hours. Removing the glass shower doors and replacing them with a curtain is required if present, but this too is an easy task.

**2. Bath Lift**

For those who require soaking in the tub, the bath lift provides a safe means of lowering down to the floor of the tub. The bath lift is a bath bench that hydraulically lowers and raises the individual into and out of the tub. The cost is in the neighborhood of \$1,500.

**3. Barrier-free Remodel**

For those that are wheelchair bound or anticipate being so at some point, the best long-term solution is remodeling the bathroom to be barrier-free. This allows an ambulatory individual safe and convenient use as well as someone who is in a wheelchair. High quality and quick to install solutions are now available for as little as \$10,000 (Best Bath).

Yes, there are some people for whom the walk-in tub is the right solution (e.g. ambulatory individuals with multiple bathrooms and adequate financial resources that absolutely require hydro-therapy), but it is the minority not the majority of the senior population for whom this is the right solution.