

SAFETY IN THE BATHRUB/SHOWER

For seniors aging in place this writer has explored options for safety in the bathtub and shower. This is not an authoritative professional document but is a guideline based on the writer's own experience while aging in place.

To start the writer found this web site that has valuable tips. However, it is commercially sponsored and is in the USA. But it appears to have little in the way of advertising. This writer has found that similar products may be found in Canada.

<https://aginginplace.org/>

We all know falls are a major cause of serious injury and sometimes death with seniors. They are to be prevented as much as we can. But it has to be recognized that no devices will prevent all falls. Only reduce the occurrence of them. We must always be vigilant for preventing them.

Shower/Bathtub

Many seniors live in apartments and they may not be able to make modifications to their units. As well, if they do, once they are attached to the building they must be left behind on move out. But there are alternatives,

This writer has a condition that makes them particularly prone to falling and the least slip in the tub causes them to fall. They live in a building where there are no shower stalls. The shower is the bathtub which means a high stepover to get into the tub to shower and generally a slick bottom. Bathmats do not always stick well either for preventing slips.

Grab Bars

One of the first solutions is to install Grab Bars. There are ones that attach with suction and a pair of them may be purchased for under \$40 from many places. The writer was given a set by their aunt (who got them from Bed, Bath and Beyond) and has been using them for many years. These are very easy to self-install.





The main thing to be aware of is to make sure of is that if the bathtub wall is tiled that the suction cups are not over a seam. If necessary, they may have to be installed at an angle to avoid a seam as shown to the left.

The writer finds that cleaning off soap residue from the tiles and wetting the suction cups before installation makes for a longer lasting grip. This writer finds that on average one of the suction cups will lose grip every few months and

at every use, one must always make sure the grip is solid before putting weight on them.

Longer ones are also available for around \$40 each as seen to the right.



Shower Seat

For this writer, showering was still too risky. In addition to the grab bars as above, they also switched to showering in a seated position. Using the tub for a bath was not an option as same condition that makes them prone to falling also makes it very difficult for them to get out of a bathtub without assistance.

Showering while seated is the solution for safety and ease of getting out. The writer has also found this solution allows for a more relaxing shower as they found that doing it while standing was somewhat stressful. Feeling one was subconsciously worrying about slipping and falling. The first time I tried it I was hooked on showering when seated.



A simple shower seat as shown to the left can be purchased for a cost in the \$50 or so range, from places like Walmart and Canadian Tire. However, a bench like this still requires one to stand on the floor of the tub while getting in or out.

The writer prefers a Transfer Bench as seen to the right. This allows one to seat themselves gently while standing on the floor. Then sliding over into the tub. To exit the tub/shower, they slide over and put their feet on the dry floor with a rubber backed bathmat before attempting to get up. While these transfer benches are about 3 times the cost of the simple bench the writer feels the extra safety is worthwhile. There are several brands and this one is a Moen and was bought at Rona.



It is set up that any water that collects on the surface of the bench will drain back into the tub. The legs on each side are adjustable so it can be completely level no matter the height of the bottom of the tub compared to the bathroom floor.

Also note it can be assembled to work either way round depending in which way the tub is facing.

The only catch is that one cannot close the shower curtain all the way and one must be careful which way they turn the shower head while holding it.



Shower Head

To shower while seated, a shower head on a hose is essential. These are very easy to install oneself and can be easily removed if you move. The writer uses one purchased at Walmart made by Water Pic that includes a valve on the shower head to vary the amount of water flow as needed. It also includes a shower massage function.

As well the writer has kept the original shower head to re-install when they move.

When showering while seated and with the shower curtain partly open, with practice one learns how to not get water all over the bathroom floor.

But remember one must still be very careful and do their own research. The writer cannot accept any responsibility for any injuries of any kind for the use of these products. This document is only a report on what has worked for them.

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