

MTI's Guide to Multi-Generational Design

Designs for All Generations in the Bathroom!

Multi-generational design is one of today's fastest growing trends in the housing industry.

As more and more people understand the benefits that smart planning affords to those of all age groups and abilities, a demand is being generated for products that combine style, safety, beauty and comfort with practicality and versatility. In fact, it's what good, smart design should be.

Multi-generational design has applications throughout the house, but it is particularly important in the bathroom. A well-thought-out bathroom can easily accommodate the needs of young children, older adults and those with disabilities. And while there are many practical considerations that play an important role in the design process, including safety, space, comfort and ease of use, being "sensible" doesn't mean the bathroom has to look utilitarian. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Smart design has always been a hallmark of MTI. Recognized with many awards for design excellence,

MTI designs are based on the premise that form must follow function. Toward that end, while style is of paramount importance for MTI, it must simultaneously be thoughtful, not allowing versatility and functionality to be sacrificed. Hence, MTI's product range contains a multitude of offerings that can meet the physical needs of all family members, making MTI products a natural fit for active Baby Boomers, families with small children, those who are physically challenged and multi-generational households. From low-profile shower bases to easy-entrance tubs, MTI has a wide variety of products that allow homeowners to enjoy a bathroom environment that is as aesthetically pleasing as it is universally functional.



Low-Profile Shower Base with Teak Shower Seat and Teutonic Enclosure



Baby Boomers and Multi-Generational Living

The oldest Baby Boomers will celebrate their 65th birthdays in 2011. According to government projections, by 2030 nearly 26% of the U.S. population will be age 65 or older, compared with just 17% today. This is creating a change in the profile of the typical American family as it is becoming more common for members of different generations to live together under one roof. According to the U.S. Census, there are currently four million such households in the United States, a number which is only expected to rise in the years ahead.



Multi-generational households come in many variations. One of the most prevalent is grandparents or older adults raising children under age 18. Another popular arrangement is a three-generation set-up with adults caring for aging parents while raising their own children and even grandchildren. Hence Baby Boomers have been called the “sandwich generation”. Furthermore, experts predict that four-generation households will become more common as more Baby Boomers reach maturity and life expectancy increases.

As the oldest of the Boomers begin to approach retirement age, they are certainly developing an appreciation for the need and benefits of multi-generational design. But they are also assessing their own near-future needs. According to a recent study by the AARP, 89% of 50-year-old-plus Americans intend to remain in their own homes for as long as they possibly can, a phenomenon known as “aging in place”. People want to know that they will be able to live comfortably and independently in their homes. With a little planning, homeowners can make smart choices now that can make all the difference later.

Buy Once; Buy Right

With the current state of the economy, people have begun to think long-term when it comes to their homes. Some people are incorporating multi-generational design features in their new homes right from the very beginning. Other people are deciding to stay where they are and remodel their homes because moving to a new house as needs change is no longer a viable option. And some families are even combining households to save money, bringing different generations under one roof. The bottom line is that homeowners are carefully considering how their purchasing decisions will affect their future.

This trend of “buy once; buy right” applies not only to the design of the house, but also to the quality of the products in the house. Making a wise choice and a smart purchase does not necessarily mean spending more. While cost is a definite consideration, equally important are durability, reliability and security, all of which equate to value. People are looking for quality products that will last and be able to accommodate a wide range of ages and needs.



Accommodating Showers

As the profile of the American family evolves to embrace a wide spectrum of ages, and needs, the principles of multi-generational design become increasingly important, especially in the bathroom.

MTI offers an extensive assortment of shower bases and frameless shower enclosures with the multi-generational family in mind. Just one of 7 different seated shower bases, the Jeu d'Eau can even be equipped with whirlpool jets for bathing young children or for an adult foot bath.

MTI also currently offers over 50 shower bases in different sizes, shapes and materials. Some are constructed of Engineered Solid-Surface material, which is a mixture of ground minerals and high-performance resins that are liquefied, poured and then hardened. These "molded stone" bases feature a low-profile, multiple-threshold design for versatile installation, great looks and easy entrance. These bases are high in both design and function.

Other bases are constructed of Lucite® cross-linked cast acrylic with strong reinforced backing to eliminate flexing of the floor pan. They are attractive and easy to clean. Some are single threshold, and others are low-profile, multiple-threshold, which means that they can be specified from the factory to accept glass enclosures on one, two or three sides. The low-profile design not only presents a very clean look, but it also makes entrance and exit easier. Taking this one step further, if a zero-barrier entrance is desired, the low-profile, multiple threshold bases can easily be recessed in the floor. When used in combination with a genuine teak shower tray, a flat transition is created between bathroom floor and shower.



Low-Profile Base with Dual Threshold Double Door Enclosure and Teak Shower Tray

when not in use. Full functionality that also introduces a softer, natural feel into the bathroom.

Complementing MTI's extensive assortment of shower bases are frameless shower enclosures with a headerless design. When spacious access to the shower is a consideration, MTI enclosures can assist. For instance, one enclosure offered mates with a 48" x 48" dual threshold shower base. Two doors that meet at one corner open a full 180° each to provide a spacious French-door-like entrance to the shower, offering both beauty and practicality. MTI's largest base of 72" x 42" can be equipped with one or more sides of glass enclosure for a wonderful feeling of open spaciousness. A large pivoting door provides access. Or, if space is a consideration, select an enclosure from MTI's Teutonic Series, which features enclosures with a sliding glass door that glides with rollers along an overhead stainless steel rail to provide easy entrance to the shower with no bottom track.



Jeu d'Eau Seated Shower Base with swirling footbath.

Teak shower trays from MTI can not only be functional, but they can also enhance the aesthetics of the bathroom, contributing to a spa-like environment. They are comfortable under foot, emit a slight teak aroma during showering and allow soap and shampoo to drain through to the floor of the shower base. Coordinating with the teak shower trays are seats made of teak and stainless steel. These seats can be installed inside or outside the shower, provide a convenient resting place and fold-up out of the way



6032 Solid-Surface Shower Base with Teutonic Shower Enclosure

Sensible Tubs

A luxurious tub is the centerpiece of any well-appointed bathroom. With MTI design flair, comfort and practicality do not need to be sacrificed when designing a bathroom for multi-generation use. MTI has an amazing collection of over 150 tub designs from which to choose in all sizes, shapes and styles. And if you require a tub that can provide easier entry and exit, 17 models are only 19" high or less.

MTI also offers 2 particularly beautiful and clever models, the Metro 1 and Metro 2. Both are of clean, contemporary design



Metro Tub and surround with matching vanity

and feature a generous front deck that is 11" wide, which serves as a transfer surface, allowing the bather to sit down on the edge and then turn into the tub instead of climbing over the edge. A coordinating contemporary tub surround has been designed just for this model. This handcrafted piece of furniture complements the tub and provides additional storage and decorative display space recessed in front under the wide deck area. The use of a transitional design enclosure will enable the Metro to integrate with a more traditional setting.

Little Things That Make A Big Difference

Regardless of the size and style of tub selected, there are a number of modest enhancements that can be made to add significantly to the bath environment, making it more multi-generationally sensitive. For instance, safety and security can be increased for all members with the addition of grab bars inside and/or outside the tub.

Available in a variety of sizes, materials and finishes, these grab bars are designed to be both decorative and functional. While providing cosmetic accent, properly positioned grab bars are a low-cost, smart, preventative addition that people of all ages will find helpful. Other popular additions for consideration include:



Grab bar

- Hand-held shower. This handy device can be used to rinse the body while bathing, and it also makes hair-washing easier.



Neck Jet Pillow

- Neck Pillows. Soft, durable vinyl pillows are available in a variety of shapes to provide neck support, comfort and relaxation.
- Neck Jet Pillows. These pillows offer the additional benefit of an incomparable neck massage by using two high-quality micro-jets of a whirlpool system.

- Radiance®. This patent-pending innovation from MTI applies radiant heat technology to acrylic bath tubs to warm the interior surface of the bath for neck, shoulders, back and bottom. It provides an even distribution of warmth to eliminate the shock of a cold tub and increases relaxation during the bath.

- Virtual Spout. This high-flow tub filler takes the place of a traditional spout. Not only does it contribute to a very clean appearance, but it also allows the bather more room in the tub and eliminates the usual filling spout as a possible source of injury.



Virtual Spout

Special Purpose Products

MTI Whirlpools also offers innovative specialty products with practical applications. The Gentle Ped® is a foot spa that provides the therapeutic benefits of a warm foot bath combined with a relaxing foot massage. Gentle Ped's combination of features enable users to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of heat, exercise bar and whirlpool action to properly care for their feet. Coupled with its compact size, these features make it easy to integrate Gentle Ped with a wide variety of decors in bathroom, home health spa or other locations in the home. And the therapy foot spa is an ideal way to increase circulation and help those dealing with Diabetes and poor foot health.



Gentle Ped foot spa



Jentle Tread® exercise vessel

MTI Whirlpools President Kathy Adams was inspired after a knee injury to create Jentle Tread®, an aquatic aerobic exercise vessel that combines the passive resistance of water with the power of full-size whirlpool jets to create a “no impact” workout. Jentle Tread is ideal for people suffering from joint pain, arthritis and sports-related injuries. Measuring 84" x 72" x 42" deep, the generous proportions of the vessel allow plenty of room for full-fledged aerobic activity, and when you're done, it is an ideal tub in which to sit and simply soak in whirlpool therapy. Jentle Tread's interior is designed with two deep tiers against one wall of the unit, which not only facilitate entry and exit but also provide a ledge for sitting or for elbow support while kicking.

Water For Health

The idea of a bath healing your mind, body and soul is not a new concept. Bathing was used as a therapeutic and relaxing healing tool dating back to the early Romans. Water is not just for cleansing but also for making us feel better and needs to be incorporated into the daily ritual of those that are older and may be reluctant to bathe due to underlying fears.

Therapy tubs can ease muscle tension and relieve pain while improving circulation by causing blood vessels to dilate. MTI offers four distinct types of hydrotherapy to appeal to every member of the family.

- Soaker tub – great for relaxation and rejuvenation; creates a renewed sense of tranquility.
- Air bath – imparts a light full-body massage via millions of tiny air bubbles; increases blood circulation and sense of well-being.
- Whirlpool bath – provides deep-tissue massage with pulsing jets of water; may be adjusted from light to vigorous.
- Combination whirlpool/air bath – provides deep-tissue and light body massages; may be used separately or together.



Water treatment is one of the oldest, most economical and safest methods for treating many common ailments, allowing those of all generations to treat minor ailments in the comfort of their own home. MTI has an extensive collection of products that make the process of bathing easier, with safety and comfort as the utmost concern. Bath therapy can be used to ease muscle strain, increase circulation, purify the body, reduce arthritis pain and maintain metabolic function.



About MTI Whirlpools

Since 1988, MTI Whirlpools has earned a reputation for impeccable quality, innovation and unique customizations for its expansive line of bath products. MTI's Designer and Classic Series include over 100 bath models, most of which can be specified as a soaker, air bath, whirlpool or combination whirlpool / air bath. Manufactured in high-quality Lucite® cross-linked cast acrylic, there is a wide variety of shapes and sizes from which to choose, complemented by a huge range of options and accessories. MTI also offers durable acrylic shower bases, frameless glass enclosures, bath furniture and specialty products, such as the Gentle Jet® laundry sink. MTI's Boutique Collection of design-savvy solid-surface tubs, lavatory sinks and shower bases presents a rich resource for those looking for bath products in alternative materials.

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