

1966

EC66-2206 The Bathroom made Safe and Useable

Alice Burton

Virginia Trotter

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Burton, Alice and Trotter, Virginia, "EC66-2206 The Bathroom made Safe and Useable" (1966). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 3986.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/3986>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

AGRI
S
85
E7
H66-2206

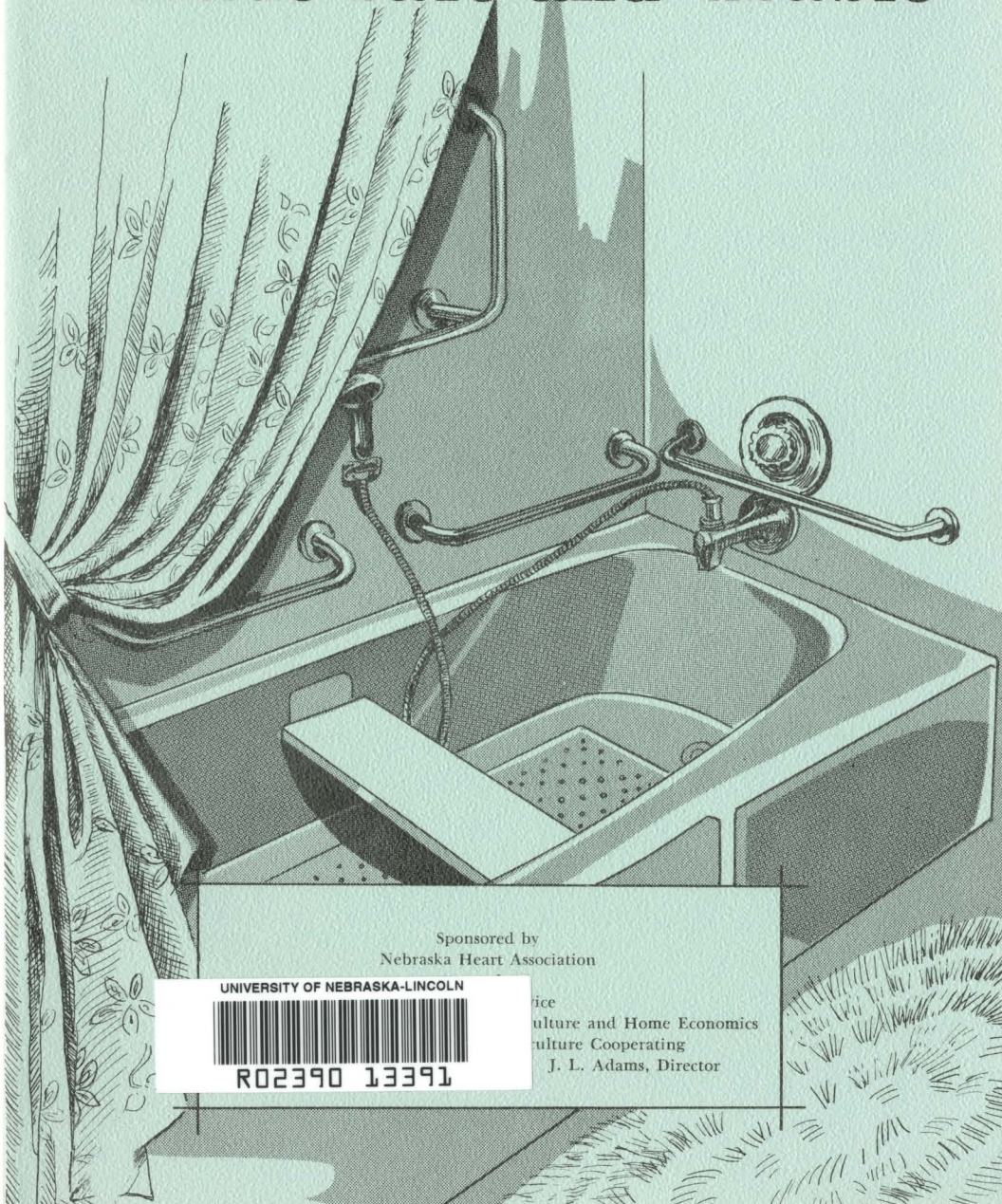
EC 66 - 2206

For Physically Limited Homemakers



the **BATHROOM**

made safe and usable



Sponsored by
Nebraska Heart Association

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN



R02390 13391

Office
Culture and Home Economics
Culture Cooperating
J. L. Adams, Director

THE BATHROOM made safe and usable

By Alice M. Burton
Consultant in Homemaker Rehabilitation
Dr. Virginia Y. Trotter
Associate Dean

Can you easily get to your sink, mirror, toilet, bathtub or shower? Can you use them comfortably? Do you feel safe from slips and falls?

No need for your bathroom to handicap you! Some thoughtful consideration and a few inexpensive features can change an unusable bathroom into a safe, convenient one. Give special consideration for use and safety to:

1. General Design
2. Bathtub or Shower
3. Toilet
4. Sink

GENERAL DESIGN

Can you easily reach your bathroom light? Can you turn it on as you enter the bathroom? It's unsafe to go through an unlighted room, especially if you have difficulty getting around. Electrical outlets should be low enough to reach easily when you are seated. However, to avoid electrical shocks they should not be too close to the water supplies.

You have more room to move freely, particularly with crutches, braces or a wheelchair, when your bathroom door is wide enough. Some homes today are built with a 24" bathroom door. For standard wheelchairs or crutches a wider door is needed. A 36" bathroom door provides adequate room.

The floor plan of your bathroom should allow enough space to move freely without bumping into something. Do you have enough space around your sink, toilet and bathtub or shower so that you can easily get to them?

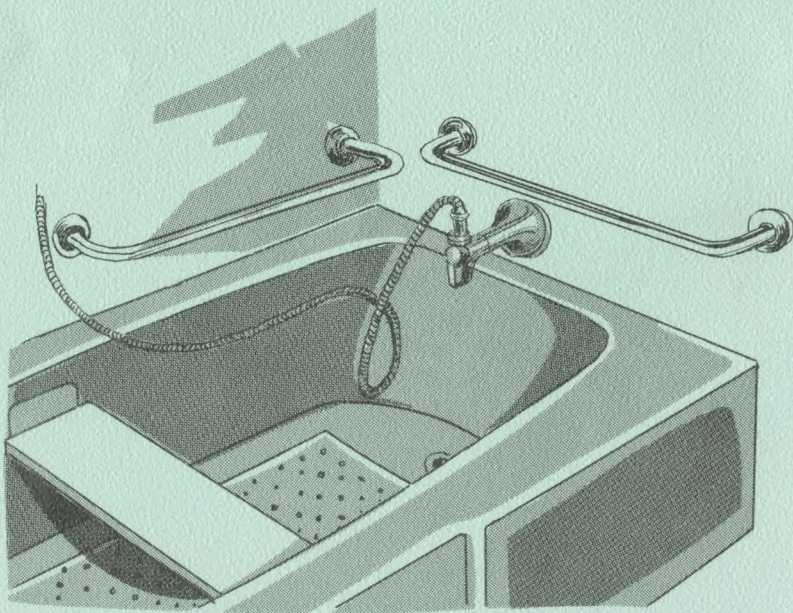
Storage for towels, bathroom tissue, etc., should be low enough for easy reach from a seated position when necessary.

Are safety features built into your bathroom? Grab bars around the toilet and bathtub or shower help you keep your balance. A non-slip floor is essential. Exposed pipes should be insulated and the thermostat on the water tank should be set below the scalding point to avoid dangerous burns.



BATHTUB OR SHOWER

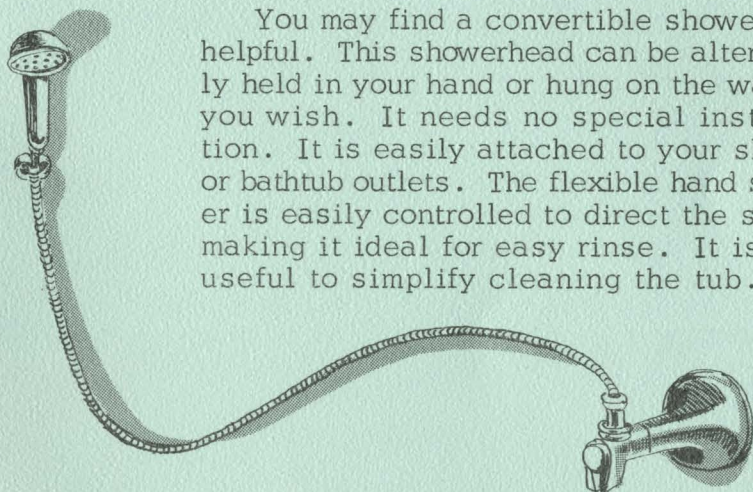
Do you find it hard to bend, stoop or get into and out of your bathtub? You may find a shower easier to use. If it's more comfortable for you to sit while showering, attach a waterproof fold down seat to the wall. Or, you may use a plastic bathroom stool with non-slip cups on the bottom of the legs.



You may be one who really prefers your bathtub. Maybe you find it difficult to sit down in your bathtub and then get up again. Try sitting on a portable safety bathtub seat. It's like sitting on a low chair in your bathtub.



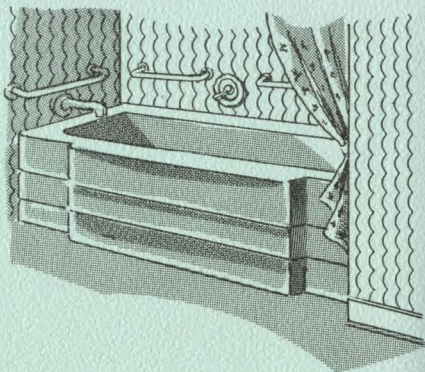
Whether inside or outside of your tub or shower, you need to be able to easily turn the water on and off and regulate its temperature. A faucet with one lever or knob is easy to operate. For easiest reach, you may want the water valve on the wall above the long side of the tub.



You may find a convertible showerhead helpful. This showerhead can be alternately held in your hand or hung on the wall as you wish. It needs no special installation. It is easily attached to your shower or bathtub outlets. The flexible hand shower is easily controlled to direct the spray, making it ideal for easy rinse. It is also useful to simplify cleaning the tub.

What can be done to avoid dangerous falls while getting into and out of the tub or shower? To help prevent slipping, place strips of non-skid tape on the bottom of the tub or shower floor. A rubber mat with non-slip features can give additional protection.

Grab bars help you keep your balance. Grab bars should be metal with non-slip finish, and securely attached to the wall. Place the bars where they help you most. Use vertical, horizontal or oblique bars. Some portable models that screw or fasten to the tub are available.



TOILET

If you have hip and/or knee involvement, it is often easier to sit in chairs that are not too low. This carries over to the toilet. In this case it would be easier to lower yourself and to get up again if the toilet height is elevated.

Try a removable elevated seat. Or, for permanent installation raise the toilet height by installing the toilet on a small platform between the floor and toilet. Have you considered a wall hung toilet? This type can be installed at the height which is most comfortable for you. Bonus! With the wall hung toilet there is no base to clean around, so floor cleaning is easier.



Support bars on either side of the toilet aid you to safely get on and off the seat. Like those on the shower or tub, they should be metal with a non-slip surface. Choose the type of support which helps you most.

For horizontal bars, a comfortable height to give you support is often 28" to 32". You may prefer a vertical bar to the side and in front of the toilet seat, or you may wish to use an oblique bar. You can support yourself on the sink edge next to the toilet if your sink is installed to withstand this pressure.

Can you easily use your bathroom sink? A faucet with one lever or knob for water temperature control is easy to operate.

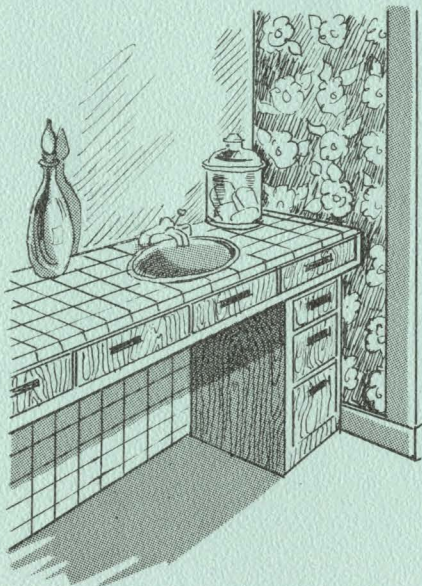
SINK

If you have braces, use crutches, or usually stand, the standard sink heights will be most comfortable for you.

When you use a wheelchair you need room for your knees under the sink. You can reach the faucet more easily if the sink height is lowered.

Countertop surface around your bathroom sink provides a place to lay combs, curlers and toothpaste. Use this surface to lean on for balance, too.

If you sit while using your sink, be certain that the mirror is installed low enough for you to see into it. Otherwise, a mirror with a stand to sit on the sink countertop is helpful.



Contact your County Extension Agent for other bulletins in this series for homemakers with physical limitations.