

Difficulty getting in and out of the bath?

A quick guide to what might help





Getting into a bath

- ▼ **Bath board** It fits across the bath. You sit on it and lift your legs over the rim. Wash or shower from there or lower yourself onto a bath seat. £14–50



NOTTINGHAM REHAB SUPPLIES

Bath seat Washing from the seat means you don't have to get right down into the bath. Or use it with a board to get into the bath in stages. £17–40+

- ▲ Combined boards and seats from £50++



PATTERSON MEDICAL LTD

- ◀ **Bath bench** A bath board that extends beyond the bath to help you get in. £100+ and some have a seat that swivels round. £150

Bath steps

One or more steps, some with hand rails. £20–60 ▶



NOTTINGHAM REHAB SUPPLIES



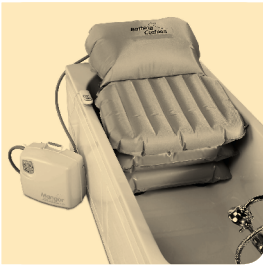
◀ **Bath lift** You sit on the seat, lift your legs over the rim and press a button on a remote control and the seat slowly lowers you into the bath. There are 4 kinds:

* **powered seat** – a motor lifts the seat up and down. £300++

▶ * **inflatable** – the inflated seat is level with the top of the bath. As air is released you are lowered into the bath. An electric pump reinflates the seat when you are ready. £350+

▶ * **bands** – you sit on a wide strip of fabric stretched across the bath. A motor feeds out more fabric to lower you into the bath. £650+

▶ * **Manual**. These use your weight and springs to go down and up. £300+



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NOTTINGHAM REHAB SUPPLIES



MOLLY BATHER

◀ **Fixed bath hoists** Electric or manual. You'll probably need help with a manual one. £900++ Ceiling track hoists don't take up floor space and are powered so you can use them without help. £800++ not including installation costs.

Grab rails Vital handholds help you move and keep steady. Very many shapes and sizes. Fixed to baths, floor or walls as needed. £3 and way up depending on shape and design.



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Replacing your bath

Showers

If you like a good soak, a shower is not for you. If you can step into it, a shower over the bath is simple to fit and you can shower from a bath board or seat. Separate showers are more expensive to buy and install, particularly if you need level access. If you can't stand comfortably a *shower stool* or *seat* will help. They can be freestanding, can fold down from the wall or be on wheels. £20++



BATHROOM SUPPLIES ONLINE

◀ Walk in baths

These baths have a door – walk in, close the door and run the water. You have to empty the bath before you can open the door to get out, so you need patience and a warm bathroom. £950++



BATHROOM SUPPLIES ONLINE

◀ Special baths

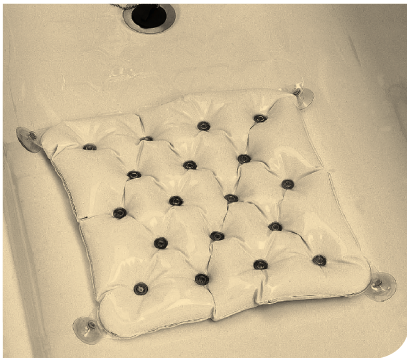
These include baths shaped to include a built-in seat (£550+), adjustable height baths (£2000++) and baths with a built-in swivel seat (£2700+)

Small gadgets

- ▶ * Sponges, brushes, flannels
- ▶ and lotion applicators with long handles. £5–20+



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- * Soap dispensers are easy to handle. An automatic senses when your hand is under it. £30+
- * Body driers work like a hair drier so no messing around with towels. £340
- * Alarms. Portable gadgets warn you if the bath water is too high or too hot. Some stop the bath from overflowing. £6++
- * Anti slip stick on shapes £5–14; non slip bathmat around £7
- ▶ * Bath cushions. These include cushions that go on the bottom of the bath, cushions to rest your head or neck on and types that fit over the tap to act as a backrest. Some can be used with bath lifts. £4–£30++

Prices Prices are what you might expect to pay – look around and choose carefully to save money. The more ++ the greater the price range between models. You should not have to pay VAT on products designed for and used only by disabled people.

What you need to know

Check the safety advice and instructions provided with all equipment. On this page is a brief summary of some things to consider.

Bath boards

You need to be able to lift each leg over the rim of the bath while sitting on the board, without losing balance. You can wash from the board, although you will be above the water (you need a warm bathroom). If you want to shower from the board, check you can reach the controls. You can't use a board with a shower screen.

Options handgrips, padded seats, cork boards (warmer); wider boards may be more comfortable but leave less room. Good drainage helps stop the board getting slippery but slats that are wide apart or very large drainage holes can be uncomfortable.

Safety Get the right size so no danger of tipping like a seesaw. Check fixes firmly to bath. If you have an unusually shaped bath, check it will fit safely.

Bath benches

Options padding, built-in grab rail, armrest, soap dish

Safety Check your feet reach the floor if you would be unstable otherwise.

Bath seats

Can be used with or without a bath board. A high seat may be easier to get on and off, but there will be less of you in the water. If you get into the bath remember the seat takes up room so you have to bathe with legs bent.

Options Many people prefer padded or shaped seats. Seats with backs may make sitting easier. Built-in handrails or armrests give you something to hold onto.

Safety Some stand in the bath, some hang from the rim (has to be at least 2.5cm wide) and some wedge inside. Check it is secure. If you have a plastic bath check it's strong enough. It may be difficult to fit a seat in an unusually shaped bath.

Grab rails

Huge range. Most fix to the wall, but some are attached to the bath or floor – check that they don't get in your way. Handles with suction pads cling to any solid flat surface – useful when visiting.

Safety position carefully to suit you. Check thick enough to grip easily and space for your hand. Wall must be strong and fixings secure.

Bath lifts

Fit most baths and most can be taken out of the bath easily by an able bodied person. You need to be able to slide onto the seat and lift your legs over the bath rim. You stay on the seat to wash: on mechanical lifts you are a few cm above the bottom of the tub. Inflatable and band types take you right down into the bath. Avoid lifts with no backrest unless you can sit unsupported. Band types are fixed to the wall so are not portable.

Safety the lifts will not lower you into the bath unless they have enough battery power to get you out again. Some models have alarm buttons.

Options padded seats, head supports, high backrests, sliding or swivelling boards to help you on.

Showers

If you can't use one over a bath, you will need a separate shower.

Options Thermostatic control to keep the water at the same temperature. Level entry types are more expensive and may need a pump to drain them. Some cubicles have a half height door – useful if you need help to wash.

Safety If you shower from a wheelchair check the tray is strong enough.

Fixed bath hoist

You have to be able to get your legs over the bath rim. May need to pull on a grab rail to swivel.

Options reclining back. On some, seat can be used like a wheelchair to get you to the bath.

Walk in baths

Most are larger than an ordinary bath, but some half length baths with a seat are designed to fit in smaller spaces. Check that you can manage the step.

Options Some adjust in height and some tilt to make getting in and out easier. These are also easier for anyone who helps you. Drop down doors can be used to slide in on and as a seat when dressing.

Who can help?

See and try before you buy

Disabled Living Centres (DLCs) are local, independent centres that have equipment to look at and try out. Trained staff give free advice. To find your nearest, contact Assist UK
Tel 0161 238 8940 www.assist-uk.org

Get an assessment

Highly recommended. An expert will discuss what will suit you and your home best. See if you can get an assessment through social services (you may have to pay towards the cost) or a DLC. Or you can pay for a private assessment. Find a local private occupational therapist through the College of OTs:
Tel 0800 389 4873 www.cotss-ip.org.uk

Getting equipment

To find a shop look under disability in the phone book. Or the social or health services may provide equipment, waiting lists and charges vary. For more about equipment and where to get it contact the Disabled Living Foundation, 0845 130 9177 www.dlf.org.uk

Practical help

You may be able to get financial or practical help adapting your bathroom.

If you have a disability you may be able to get a Disabled Facilities grant for

essential work that makes it possible for you to live independently at home. It's means tested. Contact your local council (Health and Social Services Trust in Northern Ireland) for details. Scotland has its own system of funding adaptations – contact your social work department. Work and equipment that make a bathroom accessible are VAT zero-rated. If you apply for a grant do not start work until it has been approved in writing.

Local Care and Repair and home improvement agency schemes help disabled and older people make their homes easier to live in. They have information about grants and may help you make an application or even help see the work through. They know about practical help available locally such as Handyman services that carry out small DIY jobs for you.

To find the nearest, contact:

England 08458 645210
www.foundations.uk.com

Wales 0300 111 3333
www.careandrepair.org.uk

Scotland 0141 221 9879
www.careandrepairsotland.co.uk

Northern Ireland 028 9042 8314
www.foldgroup.co.uk