# Chicago Bathroom Remodeling Pros

Educational Resources for Chicago Homeowners
www.chicagobathroomremodelingpros.com

## Small Bathroom Design Guide

### Smart Design Ideas to Make Your Small Bathroom Feel Larger, Brighter & More Functional

Many Chicago homes—including vintage bungalows, brick two-flats, townhomes, and high-rise condominiums—have bathrooms with limited square footage. The good news is that a small bathroom doesn't have to feel cramped or cluttered. With thoughtful planning, smart storage, quality materials, and proven design strategies, even the smallest bathroom can become one of the most attractive and functional rooms in your home.

At **Chicago Bathroom Remodeling Pros**, we've helped countless homeowners transform compact bathrooms into bright, organized, and comfortable spaces. This guide will help you understand the design principles, products, and layout ideas that make small bathrooms feel significantly larger without adding square footage.

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## Start with a Good Plan

Every successful small bathroom remodel begins with careful planning.

Before choosing materials, ask yourself:

✔What bothers me most about my current bathroom?

✔Do I need more storage?

✔Is the room too dark?

✔Does it feel cramped?

✔Is the bathtub being used?

✔Do I need better organization?

✔Can the layout be improved?

Small improvements made during the planning stage often have the biggest impact on the finished bathroom.

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## Maximize Your Layout

The layout determines how efficiently your bathroom functions.

Evaluate:

- Door swing
- Shower size
- Vanity location
- Toilet placement
- Walking space
- Storage opportunities
- Mirror placement
- Lighting locations

Sometimes simply replacing an oversized vanity or changing a shower door can dramatically improve the room's flow without moving plumbing.

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## Replace the Tub with a Walk-In Shower

One of the most effective ways to open up a small bathroom is by replacing an unused bathtub with a custom walk-in shower.

Benefits include:

✔Larger visual space

✔Easier access

✔Modern appearance

✔More usable floor area

✔Simpler cleaning

✔Better resale appeal

A frameless glass shower enclosure allows the eye to travel across the room, making the bathroom feel noticeably larger.

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## Install a Floating Vanity

Floating vanities remain one of the best design features for compact bathrooms.

Benefits include:

- More visible floor space
- Easier cleaning
- Contemporary appearance
- Open visual design
- Space for decorative baskets
- Custom installation height

Seeing more of the floor creates the illusion of a larger room.

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## Choose Large-Format Tile

Many homeowners assume small tile belongs in small bathrooms, but the opposite is often true.

Large-format porcelain tile offers several advantages:

- Fewer grout lines
- Cleaner appearance
- Larger visual scale
- Modern design
- Easier maintenance

Using the same flooring throughout the bathroom and shower also creates a seamless look that visually expands the room.

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## Use Light, Neutral Colors

Color has a significant impact on how spacious a bathroom feels.

Popular color palettes include:

- Soft White
- Warm White
- Light Gray
- Beige
- Greige
- Soft Taupe
- Pale Blue
- Sage Green

Lighter colors reflect more light, making the room feel brighter and more open.

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## Maximize Natural & Artificial Light

A well-lit bathroom always feels larger.

Consider:

- LED vanity lighting
- Recessed ceiling lights
- Decorative sconces
- Backlit mirrors

- Dimmable lighting
- Larger windows (where practical)
- Frosted glass for privacy

Layering different light sources reduces shadows and creates a more inviting space.

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## Install a Larger Mirror

Mirrors visually double the perceived size of a room by reflecting light and extending sightlines.

Popular options include:

- Full-width vanity mirrors
- Frameless mirrors
- Backlit mirrors
- Recessed medicine cabinets
- Custom mirrors

A large mirror is one of the simplest ways to make a compact bathroom feel more spacious.

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## Increase Storage Without Adding Bulk

Storage should be efficient—not overwhelming.

Recommended storage solutions include:

- Floating shelves
- Recessed medicine cabinets
- Built-in shower niches
- Vanity drawer organizers
- Linen towers
- Vertical cabinetry
- Wall hooks
- Hidden storage compartments

Keeping countertops free of clutter immediately makes the room feel larger.

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## Use Frameless Glass Shower Doors

Bulky shower curtains and framed doors visually divide the room.

Frameless glass offers:

✔Open sightlines

✔More natural light

✔Modern appearance

✔Easier cleaning

✔Greater visual depth

It’s one of the highest-impact upgrades for a small bathroom.

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## Select the Right Vanity

Oversized vanities often overwhelm compact bathrooms.

Popular options include:

- 24-inch vanity
- 30-inch vanity
- 36-inch vanity
- Floating vanity
- Narrow-depth vanity
- Open-leg vanity

Choose the largest vanity that still allows comfortable movement around the room.

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## Add Built-In Shower Storage

Avoid bulky wire shower caddies.

Instead, install:

- Recessed niches
- Corner shelves
- Built-in benches
- Floating shower shelves

Built-in storage keeps the shower organized without making it feel crowded.

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## Coordinate Materials

Using too many colors or materials can make a small bathroom feel busy.

For the most cohesive appearance:

✔Limit flooring materials

✔Coordinate countertop and tile colors

✔Match plumbing fixture finishes

✔Use consistent cabinet hardware

✔Repeat accent colors sparingly

A unified design creates a calmer, more spacious feel.

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## Consider Heated Floors

Radiant heated flooring is a luxury upgrade that works especially well in compact bathrooms.

Benefits include:

- Warm floors during Chicago winters
- Improved comfort
- Even heat distribution
- Quiet operation
- Energy efficiency

Because the bathroom is smaller, heated flooring is often more affordable than homeowners expect.

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## High-Rise Condo Design Tips

Small condominium bathrooms require efficient use of every square inch.

Recommended features include:

- Floating vanity
- Wall-mounted toilet (where practical)
- Frameless shower glass
- Recessed medicine cabinet
- Built-in shower niche
- Large-format tile
- Continuous flooring
- Vertical storage
- Sliding shower doors

These features maximize functionality while maintaining an open, contemporary appearance.

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## Current Small Bathroom Design Trends

Many Chicago homeowners are choosing:

- Curbless walk-in showers

- Floating wood vanities
- Quartz countertops
- Matte Black fixtures
- Large-format porcelain tile
- Backlit mirrors
- Wall-mounted faucets
- LED lighting
- Open shelving
- Spa-inspired color palettes

These trends combine timeless design with practical everyday living.

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## Budget Planning

| Upgrade | Typical Investment |
|---|---|
| Floating Vanity | $1,200–$3,500 |
| Frameless Shower Door | $1,500–$3,500 |
| Walk-In Shower Conversion | $8,000–$20,000 |
| Large-Format Tile Installation | $10–$30 per sq. ft. (installed) |
| Recessed Medicine Cabinet | $250–$800 |
| Heated Tile Flooring | $12–$25 per sq. ft. (installed) |
| Built-In Shower Niche | $300–$900 |

Actual costs vary based on bathroom size, materials selected, and installation complexity.

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## Common Small Bathroom Design Mistakes

Avoid these common errors:

- Choosing oversized vanities
- Using dark colors throughout the room
- Installing insufficient lighting
- Ignoring storage needs
- Using too many decorative materials
- Installing bulky shower curtains
- Forgetting recessed storage
- Creating excessive visual clutter
- Choosing style over functionality

Good design is often about removing unnecessary elements rather than adding more.

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# Our Recommendations

For most Chicago homeowners, we recommend:

✔Walk-in shower with frameless glass

✔Floating vanity

✔Quartz countertop

✔Large-format porcelain tile

✔Recessed shower niche

✔Recessed medicine cabinet

✔LED vanity lighting

✔Large mirror

✔Light neutral color palette

✔Built-in storage solutions

These features provide the greatest improvement in both appearance and everyday functionality while helping compact bathrooms feel much larger.

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## Chicago Bathroom Remodeling Pros

A small bathroom doesn’t have to limit your design possibilities. With thoughtful planning, quality materials, and expert craftsmanship, even the most compact bathroom can become bright, organized, comfortable, and highly functional. At **Chicago Bathroom Remodeling Pros**, we help homeowners throughout Chicago maximize every square foot with smart layouts, custom storage solutions, premium finishes, and timeless design. Whether you’re updating a condo bathroom or remodeling a historic home’s guest bath, we’ll help you create a space that feels larger, works better, and adds lasting value to your home.

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