

Plan it

Create the perfect ensuite

Ultimate zen

For all you need to know to devise a blissful retreat, read our expert tips on colour, configuration and must-have inclusions

As the place where you start and end your day, the ensuite has to work hard, but this doesn't mean you need to forgo comfort for practicality. Be it through a statement bath, a soothing colour scheme or smart organisation, your ensuite should make you feel relaxed and ready to face the day ahead. Whether you're starting from scratch or revamping an existing room, here are some simple ways to give your morning routine a lift.

Room to move

Space is a luxury, particularly in urban homes, but even if your planned room is a bit squeezey, there are clever ways to make the most of it. "Opt for a wall-hung vanity and a concealed cistern, and when choosing a shower, go for a wet room or frameless shower," says Bunnings bathroom buyer Dan Gibney. "Doors and frames on showers in small spaces can create a closed-in feel." The trick is to extend sight lines, so the more flooring that's exposed the better.

The right flooring can also do wonders for a tight space. "Large tiles in cool colours will



Lots of natural light and reflective materials are a winning combination in bathrooms where space is an issue

bounce light around the room, creating the illusion of space," says Dan. Taking the tiles to the ceiling will also create fewer transitions and less contrast, meaning a more expansive feel.

Keeping fixtures and finishes to one colour also helps to create the feeling of space. "White finishes are great at



"Avoid excessive styling or overly contrasting elements that can distract. Instead, look to focus on one or two key focal elements, such as a statement basin, tapware or tiles"

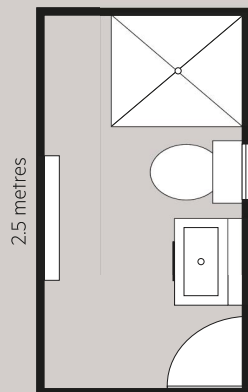
Luke Di Michiel, Caroma



Floor plan

Removing a dividing wall was a straightforward reno solution to free up the floor plan in this ensuite.

1.5 metres



2.5 metres

Planning 101

Clever configuration

Formerly a mish-mash of styles and colours and with a space-restricting dividing wall, this chic ensuite now ticks all the boxes for a bathroom with limited space to play with: a complementary colour scheme, a focal-point shower, great storage and glitzy accessories

making small tight spaces feel bigger,” says Caroma industrial designer Luke Di Michiel. “By combining white tiles and paint with white fixtures, the available light is reflected rather than absorbed, helping the space feel bright and airy. White doesn’t have to mean boring – it can help create a clean canvas from which key feature pieces can stand out and add a touch of luxury.”

When it comes to grout, make it the same colour as your tiles, says interior designer Abby Whiteley Greeff (whiteley.co.com.au). “Try to avoid black grout with a white tile in a small space,” she says. “It will look overwhelming and make the room feel even smaller.” ▶



If your room lacks light, opt for tiles in pale tones to help the walls visually recede

Interior designer Abby Whiteley Greeff shares her layout tips.

- 1. Think about what you see when you first walk in.** “You want to look at the vanity or a statement bath or shower first, rather than the toilet.”
- 2. Less is more.** “Be clever with the planning and don’t try to fit too much into the space. Work out what you need first, then select the finishes to suit.”
- 3. Choose one element that acts as a focal point.** “This might be a statement bath, an interesting tile or a stone that has lovely veining.”
- 4. Marry style with practicality.** “Install a rain shower for that luxe feel and have a secondary wall shower on a rail for everyday use.”
- 5. Minimise the loo.** “One of the biggest trends right now is concealed cisterns with wall-mounted flush plates.”

Plan it



For storage, pick drawers, which hold up to 30 per cent more than cupboards. Dividers (right) keep clutter contained



Look for a slick mixer in a matt finish for an on-trend update

Budget basics

Luxuriating under hot water after a long day is one of life's greatest pleasures, so if you only splurge on one element in your ensuite, make it the bath or shower. "The growing trend right now is the concept of the wet room, which is a shower area that's either open or set behind a frameless glass shower panel," explains Dan Gibney. Because the floor is all on one level and there's no conventional shower screen or base, a wet room can also do wonders to visually open up the room.

Where you're pushed for room, opting for a spacious shower zone – and possibly a double shower – can be a better option than trying to cram in both a bath and a shower. However, if a long soak in a hot bath is your idea of heaven, don't dismiss the idea just because space is tight. "Big right now are back-to-wall tubs," says Dan. "These are perfect for small spaces because there's no need for a bath hob." This style of bath

can also make cleaning a lot easier, as there are fewer gaps in which soapy water, dirt and dust can accumulate.

Storage solutions

An organised ensuite is the key to calmer mornings and relaxing evenings. "Think about where in a bathroom you'd automatically go for particular items and then create storage around your needs," says professional organiser Amy Revell (simplyorganised.net). "If you use your bathroom mirror to apply your make-up, try to build in some storage at face level, if possible. You may also want to create storage under your sink for bulky items."

In an existing space, there are retrofit solutions to sorting your storage that could be as simple as fitting adjustable cutlery trays in your drawers or investing in some pretty baskets to corral your clutter. For vanity cupboards, stick to easy-clean plastic containers over natural fibre ones to avoid potential damp issues.

Fantastic fit out

When it comes to creating a serene ensuite, less is always more. For clean lines and soft forms, avoid ornate or overly fussy fittings. Dan Gibney suggests looking outdoors for inspiration. "Utilise designs and materials found in nature," he says. "For example, timber vanities, stone basins, soft colour palettes, open space and soft edges. Anything that's too square will look harsh."

Likewise, shiny surfaces are out and tactile, matt materials are in. "A matt white bath pairs perfectly with the natural

warmth and luxury of brushed brass or nickel tapware to create a fresh and interesting twist on the ever-popular Nordic minimal style, while combining metallic brass tapware with deeper black and earthy coloured baths creates a more moody and sensual space," says Luke Di Michiel.

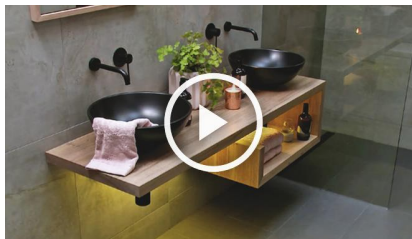
If you're not able to start from scratch, Abby Whiteley Greef says new hardware is an affordable way to change the feel of the space.

"Streamline as much as possible, so look to use mixers rather than hot and cold taps," she says. "Chrome tapware is the traditional choice, but brass or copper will make your ensuite look more luxurious. There's also been a big trend in recent years to use matt black tapware, which doesn't show fingerprints." If you already have chrome in the rest of the house and want to match, try brushed or satin chrome for a sleek but cohesive feel. ♦

EXPERT TIP



"Rain showers create a minimalist look with a spa-like atmosphere" – Dan Gibney, Bunnings bathroom buyer



Watch it!

Looking for more inspiration for an elegant ensuite? Check out this video at [bunnings.com.au/luxurious-ensuite](https://www.bunnings.com.au/luxurious-ensuite)