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# What to Consider When Choosing a Bathroom Vanity

Here's what to look for when buying or designing a vanity — or two — for your space



**Julie Sheer** 3 days ago

Houzz Contributor; journalist with more than two decades of experience as a graphics... More



Purchasing a new bathroom vanity can be as simple as measuring your space and choosing a prefab unit online or at a store. You'll get a set number of drawers with hardware, space for one or two sinks, and often a countertop. Installing a custom-made vanity will cost more and will require the involvement of professionals, such as a designer, contractor, carpenter and plumber. It will be one of a kind, with your choice of drawer configuration, colors, hardware and fixtures. Whichever route you go, here's what to keep in mind when considering a new vanity for your bathroom.



Innovative Design Build

## 1. Consider Your Space

Before you fall in love with a particular vanity, measure the bathroom area where the vanity will be installed, keeping in mind the vanity's depth and height as well as length. A large wall in a primary bath might accommodate a 60-inch vanity with lots of storage and multiple sinks, while a small powder room might be able to hold only a single-sink vanity with less storage, or a console vanity with a single sink and little or no storage. For rooms in between those sizes, a medium-size vanity (48 to 60 inches wide) could be just the right fit and usually can hold two sinks.

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Courtney Thomas Design

When deciding where to put a vanity, pay attention to the location of doors, windows, electrical outlets and switches, plumbing connections and mirrors (or where you want these elements to be).

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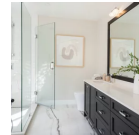
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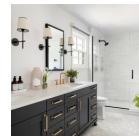
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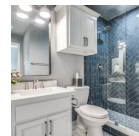
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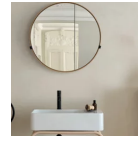
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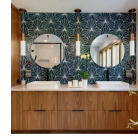




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Some designers and homeowners integrate electrical outlets in vanities for hair dryers and other accessories. If you want to do this, be sure you or your electrician checks on local codes to ensure that it's allowed.



In some larger spaces, having two vanities can make sense. If you have only a small space for a vanity and want more storage, consider shelves or other cabinetry. If one sink is enough, make sure there's enough counter space to hold toiletries.

10 Ways to Work a Two-Sink Bathroom



## 2. Think About Who Will Be Using It

When it comes to a vanity's size, style, finishes and features, be realistic about who the vanity is for. Not everyone needs two sinks, but if multiple children will be using it, two is usually a must. For a spa-type primary bathroom, you might consider including double sinks and a makeup station with granite, marble-look quartz or actual marble countertops. Keep in mind that marble needs occasional sealing. If wheelchair accessibility is important, make sure the vanity is at least 32 inches wide and there's space for a wheelchair user to roll in to use the sink.



## 3. Decide the Type of Storage You Need

Give some thought to what you don't mind keeping out on the counter and which toiletries, bathing products and hair products you want stashed in drawers or cabinets. Storage needs for a powder room vanity will differ from those for a primary or kids' bath.

### A Step-by-Step Guide to Designing Your Bathroom Vanity

Delphinium Design

A guest bath vanity might not need two sinks or a ton of storage, but ample countertop space is always appreciated.

**KraftMaster Renovations**

Vanity drawers and shelves can keep countertops from getting cluttered, and you can opt for a variety of drawer sizes for maximum versatility. Soft-close doors and drawer organizers are convenient features. Pullout shelves are the ultimate convenience, making access to hair dryers, curling irons and other accessories a breeze.

10 Bathroom Vanity Features  
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**Innovative Design Build**

A pullout drawer is a handy place to hide a trash can.

#### 4. Choose the Style

After you've decided on your vanity's size and storage options, you'll want to determine the style. To do this, consider the architecture and decor of your home. For example, a vanity with Shaker-style cabinets is a good fit for a Craftsman home or one with transitional decor.

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##### Urbane Design

Sleek floating vanities work well in modern- and contemporary-style homes. A midcentury-style vanity might have wood slats and tapered knobs, or integrated pulls and no hardware, for a clean look.

##### Urbane Design

Floating vanities are mounted on the wall and can make a space feel larger. Keep in mind that floating vanities higher off the floor are easier to clean under than those that are only a few inches off the floor.

How to Design a Bathroom That's Easy to Clean

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If you have colorful tile and flooring in the bathroom, a vanity painted in a similar shade is a good companion. Many ready-made vanities already painted are available. You also can paint a unit yourself, or you can work with a custom cabinetmaker or designer, choose a color and let a pro do the painting.

[Find a cabinetmaker](#)

**Urbane Design**

Freestanding vanities are just that — they sit on the floor like a piece of furniture and are secured to the wall with mounting screws. They can hold single or double sinks and be simple or more elaborate.

## 5. Pick Materials and Finishes

Vanities are available in a range of materials, including hardwood, engineered wood, laminate and melamine. If you're buying one off the shelf, the material and countertop options might be limited — which makes the decision easier. For some vanities, the countertop has to be purchased separately.

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Morgan McMurphy Renovation & Design

Countertops come in materials including quartz, granite, marble, laminate, concrete, wood, melamine and other engineered solid surfaces. Keep in mind that some counter materials, such as granite and marble, need to be sealed occasionally to keep them water-resistant.



Having a vanity custom-built gives you an array of options for style, material and other features, but it does tend to be more expensive than buying a prefab vanity. A skilled cabinetmaker or craftsperson can make a material such as melamine look like wood, which can save on cost.

Check out our beginner's guide to get started on your home project

Urbane Design

#### **6. Select the Drawer Configuration and Hardware**

If you have the space, a vanity with a variety of drawer sizes is ideal. A mix of cabinets and various-size drawers allows for storage of small and large items. Decide whether you want any open cubbies for towels and other items. As mentioned earlier, a custom-made vanity can have the exact configuration you want.

Wendy Wilson & Associates

Even a small vanity in a compact space can hold plenty of supplies in a cabinet and small drawers.

**Key Measurements to Make the Most of Your Bathroom**

Courtney Thomas Design

Accessorize your new vanity with knobs and pulls that reflect your home's personality. Start by choosing a finish. Polished chrome and brushed nickel are classic, while black hardware works for modern farmhouse and industrial styles. Glass knobs add a bit of glam and work with vintage and Victorian decor.

Delphinium Design

Gold hardware is having a moment. Brushed brass adds a modern touch, and burnished bronze works well for rustic styles.

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The O'Dell Group

Knobs and pulls come in a variety of shapes and configurations. You'll find basic round and modern square knobs, elongated vertical or horizontal pulls, and more.

## 7. Review Sink Options

In addition to deciding on one or two sinks, you'll need to consider sink style. There's drop-in, meaning the sink bowl is under the surface and the edges hang over on the counter; undermount, meaning the whole sink is mounted under the counter; and vessel, meaning the sink sits like a bowl atop the counter. A wider trough-type sink with two faucets can be a good option if your space is limited but you want two people to be able to wash up at the same time.

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#### Storybook Interiors

A vessel sink can be a focal point in a bathroom's design. Since it takes up more space on the vanity's surface than a drop-in or undermount version, make sure there's enough counter space for toiletries and other bath accessories.

J. Jordan Creative

## 7. Settle On Your Faucets and Fixtures

A deck-mounted faucet is installed on the vanity or sink ledge to connect to the water line under the sink. A wall-mounted faucet, installed on the wall above the vanity, is usually more difficult and costly to install.

Your Guide to Buying a Bathroom Faucet

Beth Howley Creative LLC

A prefab vanity made for a deck-mounted fixture will have one or three predrilled holes in the countertop. The holes accommodate either a centerset faucet, for which the spout and the hot- and cold-water handles are all one piece, or a widespread faucet, for which the spout and handles are separate. A vanity with a single hole will accommodate a faucet with a spout and a single handle or lever.

Beth Howley Creative LLC

When choosing a faucet, be sure to pay attention to the spout's height and reach. A faucet that's too low will be hard to use, and one that's too high might cause water to splash outside the sink. The spout's reach should extend to about the middle of the sink.

The choices for spout style are numerous, and finishes include polished, brushed or matte.

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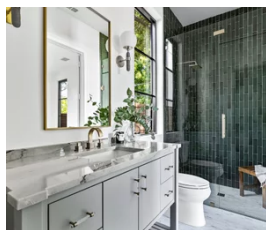
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