

Quick Connections ▲

Faucets that feature click-together or fast-connect fittings make securing connections quicker and easier. For example, American Standard's Speed Connect drain (photo on facing page) simplifies the once convoluted task of connecting the parts of the lift-up handle and pop-up stopper — now it's a simple twist connection. And the latest Moen Hydrolock connectors (photo above) are simple click-together supply fittings. Some models improve water efficiency, reducing flow rates from the standard 2.2 gpm to 1.75 or 1.5 gpm.

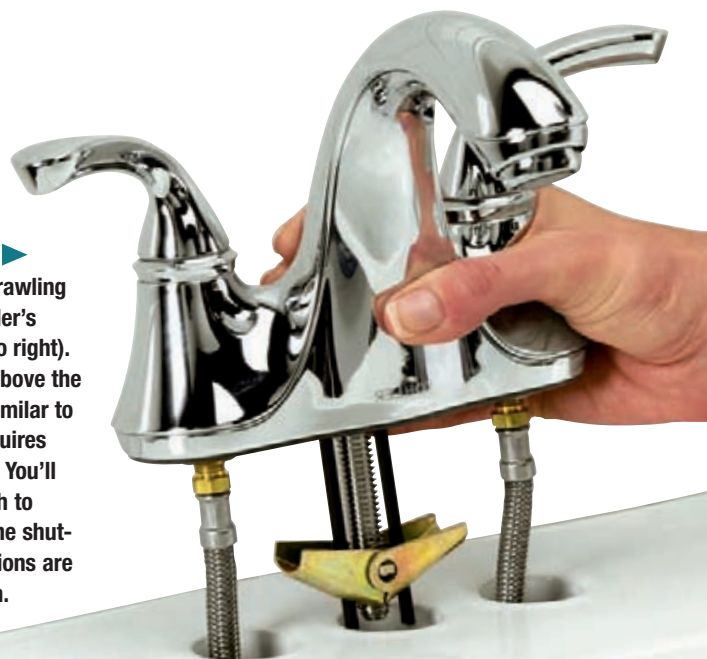
Faucets

Whether you're working in a kitchen or a bathroom, replacing a faucet requires the same basic steps. The only tools you typically need are an adjustable wrench, a screwdriver and maybe a little Teflon tape, Teflon paste and plumber's putty. You may also want to purchase or rent a basin wrench (a long articulating wrench designed to reach the bolts that are tucked up behind the sink) if the mounting nuts are difficult to reach.

First, shut off the supply valves and disconnect the supply hoses from the valves (**photo 1**). Then remove the faucet-mounting nuts, lift out the old faucet and clean the sink surface. Next, follow the manufacturer's instructions to install the new faucet (**photo 2**). In the case of a lavatory faucet, you may also have to install the companion drain assembly and pop-up stopper. Finally, connect the new supply hoses to the supply valves, and connect the kitchen sprayer hose to the spout outlet (**photo 3**) or the widespread valves to the spout inlet.

Top-Mounting Faucet ►

If you dread the thought of crawling under the sink, consider Kohler's Forte center-set faucet (photo right). It attaches to the sink from above the countertop. The fastener is similar to a wall-anchor toggle and requires only a screwdriver to secure. You'll still have to reach underneath to connect the supply lines to the shut-off valves, but those connections are typically not difficult to reach.





Easy Enclosures ▼

The Sterling Accord bathtub-and-shower-wall system (photo below) is a snap (literally) for anyone to install. The interlocking panels snap in place, eliminating potential alignment mistakes, and they don't require caulk, so you won't have to wonder if you've properly sealed all of the seams. The Accord system is made from Vikrell, a proprietary solid-composite material that's very durable and easy to maintain.



Tubs/Showers

Replacing a bathtub and shower enclosure is a more ambitious undertaking than installing a faucet, but it's still a project that many homeowners can successfully complete. The most challenging part is installing the new faucet components and attaching the drain-waste-overflow to the new tub. If you're not confident about performing these tasks, you can hire a licensed plumber to make these connections and still save money by installing the tub and enclosure walls yourself.

The first step is to remove the old enclosure or wallcovering; then disconnect the drain (photo 1, inset) and plumbing fixtures. Next, remove any fasteners that attach the tub to the walls, pry the tub loose and remove it (photo 1).

Follow the manufacturer's instructions (or hire a plumber) to install the new valve (photo 2), shower-spout stub and tub-spout stub. Then attach the drain-waste-overflow to the tub (photo 3).

Install a mortar bed (photo 4) or manufactured tub-support pad on the floor to prevent the tub from moving or shifting when it's filled with water. Then follow the manufacturer's instructions to install the new tub over the mortar (photo 5) or pad, making sure the drain tailpiece is aligned over the drain opening.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to install the enclosure system (photo 6) and curtain rod or bypass doors. Finally, install the spout, showerhead and handles.



When in Rome ▲

Installing a Roman tub faucet can frustrate even an experienced professional, so most DIYers wouldn't attempt the job — until now. The new Moen Roman tub faucet valve (photo above) simplifies the process to a DIY-friendly level. An adjustable shank, flexible hoses, snap fittings and CPVC or PEX supply inlets make the new system adaptable to a variety of substrate materials and thicknesses.



◀ Know Your Valves

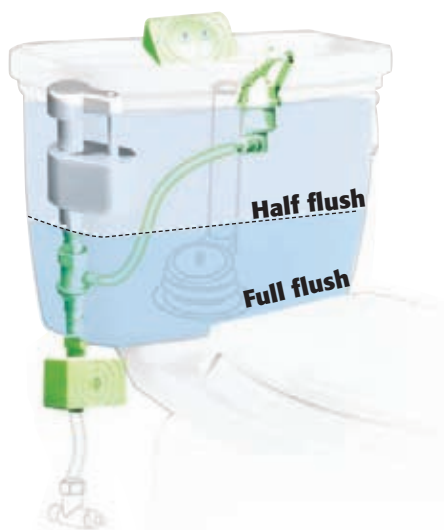
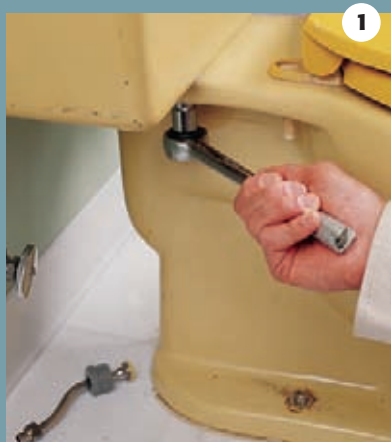
Treat yourself to more comfortable bathing by upgrading a regular shower valve to a pressure-balancing or, better yet, thermostatic model. Pressure-balancing valves automatically adjust for changes in the hot or cold flow, eliminating your chance of getting scalded when someone flushes a toilet. Thermostatic valves take temperature control a step further by featuring a temperature setting control, so you'll have the perfect water temperature every time you turn on the valve.

The Price Pfister TX8 system (photo left) features a thermostatic valve cartridge that you can retrofit in many existing Price Pfister single-control valves without opening up the wall. The system also features multihead body sprays that you can add without installing additional control valves. (Each spray contains an independently controlled ceramic valve.)

HELP!

If you're stumped with an installation question, free help is often just a mouse click away. Many of the major fixture manufacturers offer growing libraries of installation manuals, animated tutorials and even videos that show installation demonstrations or product overviews. You can also find plumbing projects on the Handyman Club Web site. Or tap into the extensive plumbing knowledge of your fellow Handyman Club members on the forum area of the Web site. — DC





◀ Adjustable Flushing

If you're planning to replace your toilet, consider improving water efficiency with a dual-flush model. These toilets feature two flush capacities: a full flush and a half flush. To add dual-flush capability without replacing the toilet, DIYers can install the Brondell Perfect Flush dual-flush valve (represented in green, photo left) to an existing single-flush toilet.

▼ Safer Tank Install

A brand-new toilet can be ruined with the turn of a nut: Overtighten the tank bolts and the tank can crack, meaning another trip to the store to buy another new toilet. The best practice is to alternately tighten each bolt evenly, just until the tank makes contact with the base. Another way to avoid damaging the tank is by installing a Kohler toilet that features the DryLock installation system. The tank on this toilet features a metal bracket plate (photo below); the bolts are secured to the plate rather than running through the tank, eliminating the risk of cracking the tank.



Many people don't think of their toilet as a design feature, but a new toilet can greatly enhance a bathroom. No matter what model you choose, the steps for replacing or installing a floor-standing toilet are basically the same.

First, remove the old toilet. Shut off the water-supply valve and disconnect the supply hose. Then drain the tank, remove the tank bolts (**photo 1**), lift off the tank and remove the floor nuts. After removing the old base, clean and repair the closet flange if it is corroded or broken. Next, place a new wax ring around the horn (drain hole in the base of the new toilet; **photo 2**). Then install new bolts in the closet flange, and place the base over the bolts. Press down to seat the base in the wax ring, and secure the base to the floor with new nuts. Install a flush valve and fill valve in the new tank, and attach the tank to the base (**photo 3**). Finally, attach the seat and connect the supply hose. ♦