

Easy in...Easy out — Walk-in Bathtubs!

In October of 2006, I wrote an article in this publication about the merits of walk-in bathtubs. This article is a sequence with more specifics about exactly what to look for when selecting a walk-in tub. Since my 2006 article, a number of additional walk-in bathtub manufacturers have come on the scene.

side of a bathtub, the recent advent of "walk-in" bathtubs affords us the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of taking a soothing heated whirlpool bath. Soaking in a whirlpool bath is a great way to relieve aches and pains while also reducing stress, as the soothing hydrotherapy massage brings immediate

relief to tight muscles and aching joints.

Regular bathtubs with their high sides make it difficult, or downright impossible, for anyone who is mobility challenged to enter or leave the tub, especially older persons and people of all ages. Walk-in bathtubs allow the user to easily enter and leave through a watertight door

that swings open when the tub is empty of water and the door release lever is opened.

There are presently a number of manufacturers offering this new innovative bathing aid.

However, as there are usually both well made and poorly made products of all kinds, there are also good, and not so good, walk-in bathtubs available.

In evaluating a number of different walk-in bathtubs, I found that the overall quality of construction varied between manufacturers from very good...to not so good! One manufacturer in particular had a great stainless steel sub-frame that assures long lasting strength, along with easy installation and leveling. Varying door sizes from different manufacturers allowed either easy, or sometimes

difficult entry. Some had well designed simple to use latches that opened and closed easily, and some did not. Tub depths varied from different manufacturers, as did seat heights, quality of faucets, and other fittings.

While revisiting current walk-in bathtub offerings, I found that one manufacturer in particular stood out above all of the others in a substantial number of important areas. The company is HLS, Home Living Solutions based in Temecula, California.

From what I could ascertain, HLS is one of only two walk-in tub manufacturers that complies with IAPMO, The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials - Council Standards, which is dedicated to the protection of the public's health and safety. IAPMO calls for a secondary drain, and also a tile flange around the tub wall abutting perimeter, which prevents any water from seeping behind the tub and ultimately causing harmful mold growth, water damage, and personal harm.

HLS has received the UPC, United Plumbing Code approval, along with the USPC, United Spa Plumbing Code approval on their therapy systems. They also have the important ETL, Electrical Testing Lab approval on their therapy systems as well.

The doorway was wide enough to allow easy entry and the ergonomic lever assures ease of use. I found the heated hydrotherapy feature worked great. Their installation crew was experienced, courteous, and efficient. Best of all...their tub comes with a lifetime limited warranty and their selling price was among the lowest of all the tubs evaluated!

The HLS stainless steel frame assures their walk-in tubs to have a very high degree of structural integrity along

with a no-rust guarantee, and the quality of their laminated fiberglass tub constructed was excellent. I also noted that HLS uses a great, highly energy efficient Syllent pump which converts the otherwise wasted electric pump motor heat generated to actually keep the water heated...and it works great!

What all of the above means to us contractors and builders, and especially to our clients, is a problem free installation, no costly warranty service calls, and most of all, assurance of minimal chance of fire or flood damage that would result in fatal consumer injuries, and potential lawsuits.

Although the HLS walk-in tubs had the best features that anyone could want, their price was very reasonable, and substantially less than a number of inferior tubs from other manufacturers. A wise shopper should take the time and effort to check around to see what's available and carefully review the pros and cons of the many different walk-in tubs available before making a final selection. I am sure that anyone doing so will agree that the HLS, Home Living Solutions walk-in tubs are the very best choice by far!

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Nothing can replace the tension reducing, muscle relaxing, and downright enjoyable results of taking a relaxing heated bath, especially with whirlpool massage feature.

Many of us take bathing for granted. But some of us find it very difficult to step over the high sides of a bathtub and are denied these great benefits.

There are currently over 54 million Americans with some form of permanent disability and many millions more who incur an unexpected injury resulting in some form of physical mobility impairment. When we are healthy, we take for granted the simple action of being able to easily step up and over objects like climbing stairs, or taking a bath.

For those of us who have difficulty stepping over the