

Bathing Problems and Simple Solutions Factsheet 50b – 15 Feb 2007 (2 Pages)

This factsheet offers some practical solutions to problems with bathing and showering. You will find **Figures 1 – 10** on factsheet **FS50c Bathing Diagrams Appendix** which accompanies this factsheet **FS50b**, and **FS50a**.

Slippery surfaces

Non-slip bath mats can be purchased from chemists, larger supermarkets and other suppliers. These should be placed on the bottom of the bath, **before** filling with water. The rubber suction cups should also be checked regularly for wear.

Stepping over the side of the bath – would a grab rail help?

Towel rails, wash basins and taps may not take your weight if you lean on them. A relative or Handyperson may be able to fit a grab rail onto the wall beside the bath. A wide range of rails are available, but they should be suitable for safe use when wet and **must be fixed securely**; metal rails will need to comply with special regulations. Specialist advice and a Handyperson service is available from your local Care and Repair Team, their number can be obtained from Care Direct – on 0845 1551 007.

Bath seats

A bath seat placed in the bottom of the bath, see **Figure 1**, may help you to get up and down more easily, especially in conjunction with a grab rail. Different heights are available; a lower one, see **Figure 2**, will allow you to be more immersed in the water, but it may be more difficult for you to get yourself up and down.

Fitting a bath seat

The seat must fit securely on the bottom of the bath – if there are rubber suckers on the feet they must have a smooth surface to adhere to. If used with a non-slip rubber mat, this should not be placed under the suckers. Several types of seat are available, and suppliers can advise you which type of seat is best for your bath.

Bath/shower boards

A bath board, see **Figure 3**, can be used to help you to get onto a bath seat, or you can sit on it when using an over-bath shower or having an all-over wash.

When choosing a bath board, make sure that it will take your weight, and that it is the correct width for your bath. Fit the board following the manufacturer's instructions. Bath boards are usually fitted towards the opposite end of the bath to the taps, and the brackets should be adjusted so that they grip the bath firmly. The bath board must not slip or slide. Some baths may not be suitable, particularly if they are shaped or contoured on the inside.

Using a bath board

Stand with your back to the bath, feeling the edge of the bath board with the back of your legs. Feel for the board with your hands, and sit down on the board, see **Figure 4**. Slide backwards slightly, lift your legs one at a time over the side of the bath, then slide to the middle of the bath board, see **Figure 5**.

When you get out of the bath, move to the edge of the board and lift your legs out of the bath, one at a time. Steady yourself, and push yourself up to a standing position.

Using a bath board with a bath seat

If you are unable to step into the bath to use a bath seat, a bath board can be used to make this easier. The seat should be placed on the base of the bath, slightly in front of the board. Once you are seated on the board, hold firmly onto the board or the side of the bath, and slowly lower yourself onto the bath seat.

See **Figures 6 – 10**.

Your decision about whether it is safe for you to use a bath board and seat must always be determined by your ability to get out of the bath safely. You need to have strong arms and shoulders to undertake this manoeuvre.

To get out of the bath, move your arms behind you and grip the bath board firmly. Bend your knees, and bring your feet as far back as possible, then lift yourself backwards so that you are again sitting on the bath board.

If you are unable to use a bath board and seat, there is a range of other equipment which may be helpful. **If you are unsure about what type of equipment you need, please seek independent advice and/or ask for a trial or home demonstration before buying the equipment.**

Do you have a step-in shower cubicle?

If you feel unsteady when using your shower, it may be possible to fit a seat or some grab rails. Seats can be free-standing or wall-mounted. When choosing a seat, consideration should be given to the space available, the construction of the cubicle walls and strength of the base. Make sure that any seat, particularly one which is wall-mounted, can take your weight. Wall-mounted seats should be fitted on a wall opposite or adjacent to the shower controls so that you can reach them more easily.

If you are unable to step into your shower cubicle, you may wish to consider replacing this with a level access, or 'wet room' shower area. In the instance you may need to obtain specialist advice from Devon County Council's Adult and Community Services – contact Care Direct on 0845 1551 007.

Grab rails

Grab rails can be fixed to help you to get in and out of the shower, and to increase safety. Again, these must be fixed securely, preferably to solid walls, and should be suitable for use when wet.

Devon Care and Repair Handyperson Service can help, a small charge will apply.

Further information

A further factsheet - **FS50a Help with bathing and showering** is available for more general information about solving problems with bathing and showering and how to access services which can help.

Further useful information on equipment available can be obtained from the Disabled Living Foundation website: www.dlf.org.uk/public/factsheets.html

Further factsheets can be found online at www.devon.gov.uk/factsheets

If you have any further questions or need help with accessing web-based information please contact **Care Direct 0845 1551 007**

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Care Direct 0845 1551 007

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