

Plumbing's in the Wall

Wall-hung toilets are finding their way into modern bathrooms, but they're not for every homeowner

By Jeff Zagoudis, Associate Editor



Though they can be expensive and are more complicated to install, wall-hung toilets' sleek, space-saving design and customizable height have made them an increasingly popular option.

Flush toilets have been around for more than two centuries, so one might think there isn't much that can be improved. Recently, however, a newer type of unit has found its way into residential bathrooms across the U.S.—the wall-mounted toilet.

Originating in Europe, wall-hung toilets function the same way as their floor-mounted counterparts, but the tank is hidden behind the drywall inside the framing.

The wall-hung toilet offers three practical advantages:

- Space savings:* Wall-mounted toilets are a great choice for smaller bathrooms because the bowl and actuator plate are the only parts in the room. The outer tip of the bowl is up to 12 inches closer to the wall, which can make a huge difference in a small bathroom.
- Easy cleaning:* Because the toilet bowl doesn't touch the floor, cleaning the area around the fixture is much easier.
- Adjustable height:* When installing a wall-mounted toilet, the remodeler can customize the height for the homeowner. This is especially helpful for people with mobility issues who might need a higher toilet.

From a design perspective, a wall-mounted toilet instantly brings a modern, sleek aesthetic to any bathroom. That, more than anything, appears to be driving the model's increased popularity. Plus, the "floating" toilet gives the remodeler greater design flexibility because it allows for fewer pattern breaks on the floor and walls.

Slow the Flow

For all of these advantages, remodelers say the concept has yet to really catch on in the U.S. Those interviewed report completing

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—Mike Mackin, Mackin & Sons Plumbing

10 or fewer bathroom projects with wall-hung toilets in the last four years.

One possible reason for this is the level of commitment involved with making the switch. In addition to knocking out a wall, the pipes must be moved from their usual spot in the floor.

“It becomes a question of can you physically get the drain pipe up the wall from the basement?” says Mike Mackin, owner of Mackin & Sons Plumbing, in Toledo, Ohio.

For this reason alone many professionals don’t install a wall-hung unit unless the project is a new home or a major remodel.

Cost also becomes a factor because wall-hung toilets are significantly more expensive than traditional units. “They’re buying all of the components, so it’s well over the price of your standard toilet,” says Robert Kramer, AKBD, remodeling consultant for Cipriani Remodeling Solutions, in Woodbury, N.J. The four main components are the wall tank, flush actuator, toilet bowl, and seat. Altogether, the cost of the toilet can run up to \$1,000. Plumbing and installation can be as much as twice that number.

If a homeowner wants a wall-hung toilet, however, a high price tag usually isn’t going to deter them. “They’re going for the look and the style,” Kramer says.

Switching It Up

For those remodelers embarking on an installation, there are a few key points to keep in mind:

Framing: The project won’t get far at all if you’re not working with a suitable wall. Most wall-tank models can accommodate 2x4 or 2x6 framing. To keep the tank from falling out of the wall, Kramer recommends bolting the steel frame of the carrier to the studs to hold the toilet up. Mackin adds, “There’s quite a bit of framing involved, so there needs to be a lot of collaboration between the carpenter and the plumber.”

Drainage: When planning out the water and waste lines, make sure you have room for at least a ½-inch water supply line above the tank and a 3-inch waste line below the unit.



COURTESY OF NORMANDY REMODELING

In this bathroom by Normandy Remodeling, in Hinsdale, Ill., the wall-hung toilet is in keeping with the floating, minimalist vanity and contributes to the clean, uncluttered look of the space.

Repairs: Once the toilet is in the wall, plumbers need access to it in the event that repairs are needed. “Ideally, you want to have access from the bathroom or the room behind it,” Mackin says.

Overall, many agree that the actual installation process isn’t especially difficult. But remodelers should be wary, Mackin says, of “underestimating the time that it takes and the design challenges involved in switching the drains.”

In the end, homeowners who have weighed the consequences and made the switch to a wall-hung toilet have nothing but good things to report.

“It’s a little bit more expensive,” Kramer acknowledges, “but they’ll enjoy it for many years.” **PR**

➔ **Kallista Pleo**

From the Greek word meaning “to sail” or “to float,” Kallista’s Pleo sports a stylized hourglass shape that provides a sleek aesthetic while making for easy cleaning underneath. Thanks to the incorporated dual-flush technology, with flush rates of just 1.0 or 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf), the Pleo achieves EPA WaterSense certification. The bolts and seat post holes on the side are covered by panels for a clean appearance. Finishes can mix and match for the actuator plate and the bowl, which also features a slow-close, quick-release hinged seat. kallista.com

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⬇️ **Kohler Veil**

Kohler’s flagship wall-hung toilet can save homeowners up to 12 inches of space in the bathroom. In addition, the in-wall frame can be set at any height between 15 3/8 inches and 28 1/2 inches. The actuator plate can be removed to access the tank in the event that repairs are needed. Dual-flush technology provides WaterSense-certified flush rates of 0.8 gpf or 1.6 gpf. us.kohler.com

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⬅️ **Geberit Concealed Tank and Carrier Systems**

Low maintenance is the hallmark of this in-wall carrier system from Geberit. If repairs are needed, the plumber can easily access any internal components behind the decorative flush panel, with no tools necessary for simple changeouts. The system can fit any 2x4 or 2x6 wood- or metal-frame wall, making it an option for most bathrooms. An adjustable tank height of 15 to 19 inches ensures that anyone will be able to use the fixture, which supports up to 880 pounds. geberitnorthamerica.com

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➔ **Duravit Vero**

This rectangular-shape Duravit wall-hung toilet comes in two colors and has a WonderGliss surface finish, which helps to keep the bowl clean. The slow-close toilet seat and cover both are removable from their stainless steel hinges. The dual-flush actuator plate connects with a Geberit in-wall tank and carrier; additional fittings are available for a matching wall-mounted bidet. duravit.us

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⬆️ **Toto Maris Wall-Hung High-Efficiency Toilet**

The wall-hung version of this high-efficiency toilet saves 9 inches of space, making it ideal for small areas. Sporting dual-flush technology, users can execute a light (0.9 gpf) or full (1.6 gpf) flush on the decorative wall-hung flush panel. The skirted glass-like china bowl can be installed at standard or universal height to accommodate all users. The SanaGloss coating prevents build-up of bacteria and other matter. totousa.com

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