



BEHIND THE BATHROOM DOOR RESEARCH

How often do we flush the toilet? How much toilet paper do we use? Why do some people spend longer in the shower than others?

What do we do while we're soaking in a deep bath? What are our most wasteful bathroom habits? What technology do we allow into our bathrooms?

In other words, what really goes on in the privacy of our bathrooms at home?

The latest research project by the BMA delves into this question and investigates the personal routines and behaviours that occur in the privacy of our bathrooms at home. It seeks to understand why we behave the way we do in the bathroom, and in particular, the barriers and drivers to water-saving habits.

The research was supported by Professor Ian Walker of the School of Psychology at Swansea University, who explained the principles of habit-forming and why people persist with certain routines in the bathroom despite knowing they are wasteful or uneconomical.

Professor Walker advised that psychologically, the optimum time for behaviour change is when a new bathroom is fitted. Many of our bathroom habits are instilled during childhood. In the privacy of the bathroom, without the peer pressure and social influences that drive many of our everyday behaviours, our bathroom habits go unchallenged and unchanged into adulthood. A new bathroom or even just a new bathroom product interrupts the subconscious day-to-day routines and gives space for new routines to be developed.

Methodology

The research was in the form of an online diary. 48 UK residents across a range of demographic profiles and household circumstances were recruited into the study to undertake and report on 28 different bathroom tasks over a 7-day period. This resulted in 67 hours of feedback and 2330 interactions with the participants.



Diary Reports



Some stats from the research

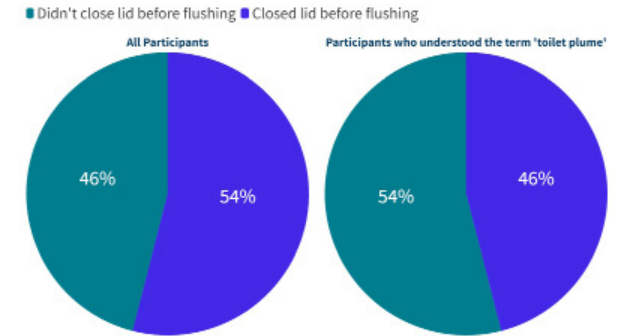
The average time a shower is run to warm up is 1 minute 30 seconds.

During the week, the average time spent in the shower is 9 minutes 30 seconds. This extends to 10 minutes 30 seconds average time spent in the shower at weekends.

Women generally run the shower to warm up for longer but tend to spend slightly less time in the shower than men.

Just over half of toilet visits (54%) are flushed every time. 23% are not flushed after a wee. 23% are not flushed at night.

31% of participants had a good understanding of the term 'toilet plume'; however, this didn't particularly encourage them to close the toilet lid before flushing.



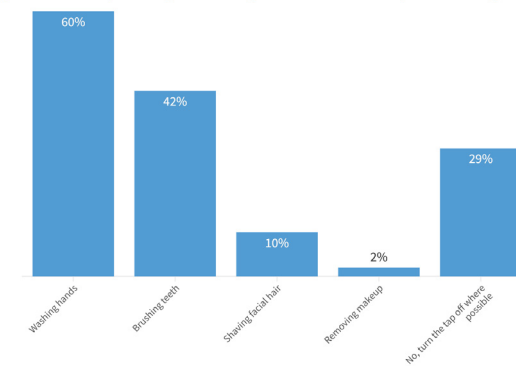
Women use toilet paper for most of their toilet visits (96%) and, on average, use 6.1 sheets per visit. Men use toilet paper for less of their toilet visits (64%) but use more toilet paper each time (7.5 sheets).

Most bathrooms included a bath (87%), but almost a third of these baths are not used.

60% of participants left the tap running whilst washing their hands, compared to 42% who left the tap running whilst brushing their teeth.

Keeping the temperature the same in the shower is the most popular option overall, however, 38% of women increased the temperature during their shower.

Do you leave the tap running whilst using the washbasin for any the following?





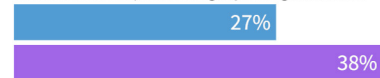
Changing temperature whilst in the shower

■ Men ■ Women

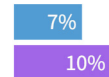
No. Kept the temperature the same



Increased the temperature slightly during the shower



Decreased the temperature slightly during the shower



Decreased the temperature down to cold at the end of the shower



Decreased the temperature then increased it again



Got into a cold shower and manually increased the temperature to a hot shower



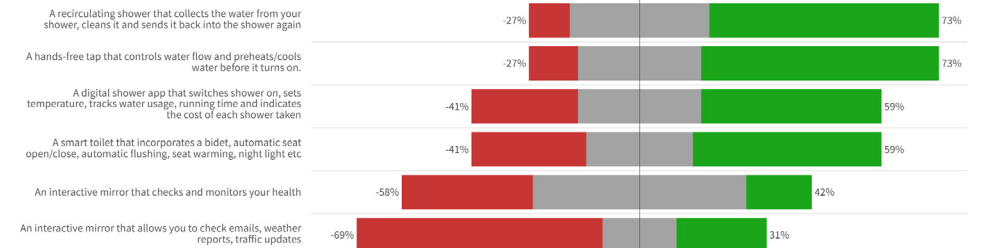
The role of technology in the bathroom

As homes become more and more digitised and connected, the bathroom is increasingly the place to get away from outside interference such as emails, social media and messaging.

Almost half of the study participants (48%) wanted their bathroom to be a peaceful sanctuary without distractions, and a further 37% viewed their bathroom as a practical space to get clean quickly, again without distractions. Only 13% wanted more technology in their bathroom, and this was focused more on comfort and relaxation, such as the ability to play music or set mood lighting, rather than bringing in outside distractions, such as weather or traffic updates.

Alternatively, there was interest in technology that enabled people to understand their water usage in the bathroom and products that helped them save water without loss of comfort and product performance.

■ Not for me ■ Maybe ■ Interested



The drivers behind wasteful bathroom habits

The participants in the study admitted to various habits that they considered to be wasteful. These ranged from taking deep baths and long showers to leaving the tap running when brushing teeth and always flushing the toilet. When asked why they continued with a particular habit despite knowing they were using more water than necessary, alongside 'childhood habit' as advised by Professor Walker, another key reason was that they considered it necessary for their 'personal wellbeing'. It was clear that when the requirement for personal wellbeing is the driver behind a bathroom habit, the motivation to change this habit is very low. Indeed, participants didn't see a need to change these habits, prioritising their personal requirements over reducing their water consumption.

The perfect bathroom

The final task in the diary study was to put together a mood board of 'The Perfect Bathroom', and this highlighted some design trends that have started to filter down into the mainstream. Black brassware is featured in many of the mood boards, along with the inclusion of plants and greenery in the bathroom. Patterned floor tiles are a popular feature, and recessed shelving in the shower is shown on several mood boards. Natural light, particularly coming from a window with a view, is very desirable, as is subtle artificial lighting. Interestingly, although a third of participants never used their bath, a large bath is a key component of the perfect bathroom.