

Safer bathrooms, Safer bathing

Getting a grasp on grab bars

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For more information about this infographic or to learn about our research on bathroom safety, please contact: **Dr. Alison Novak**, alison.novak@uhn.ca



81% of people who are admitted to the ER with bathroom related injuries are under the age of 65. People of all ages are at risk of falling in bathrooms.¹



Based on laboratory research, having a grab bar in your bathroom "just in case" can reduce your chance of falling in the bathtub by up to 75% following a slip or balance loss.²



You are 2.4 times more likely to be injured falling in a bathroom than in any other part of your home.³

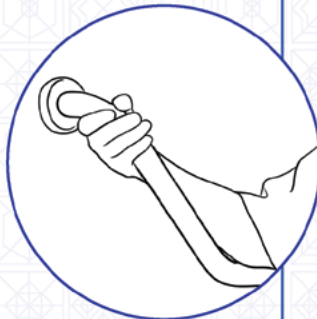
Movements made while bathing can be challenging for all ages, especially when the ground is slippery. Grab bars help keep your balance while you bend, turn and twist.

Grab bars are an effective fall prevention tool

Comparing types of Grab bars

PERMANENT

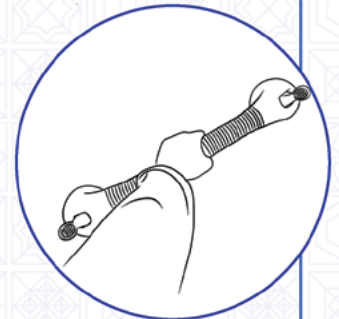
Are installed directly to the wall of your bathroom, mounted securely to a stud or solid backing.



- ✓ Shown to reduce fall risk in lab studies
- ✓ Can be securely installed to a stud or solid backing
- ✓ Available in longer lengths with a variety of textures and colours
- ✗ May have a higher upfront cost

TEMPORARY

Can be mounted using suction cups or clamps to your tile wall or bathtub rim.



- ✓ Easy to install by most people
- ✓ Useful for travelling or when permanent installation is not possible
- ✗ May not be safe or effective in all bathrooms
- ✗ Typically short in length
- ✗ It can be challenging to know if you have installed it correctly

How to select a grab bar for your bathroom

Your grab bar should be:



At least 900mm (36") long



About 32 to 35mm (1.25-1.5")
in diameter⁶



Rubberized or have a
texturized coating for a more
comfortable and secure grip



Able to support 300lbs
of applied force from
body weight

Installing a wall-mounted permanent grab bar

1

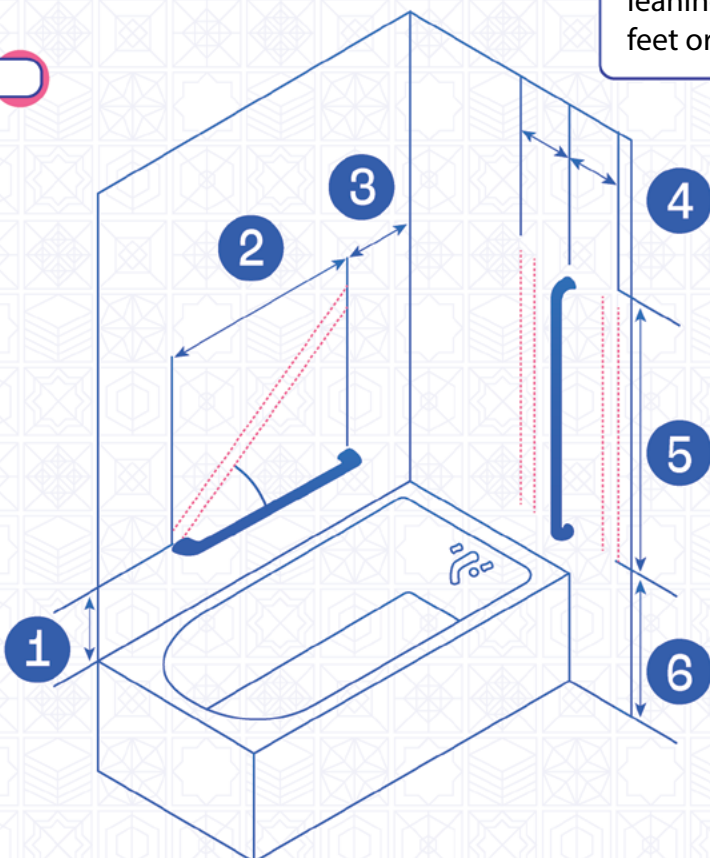
Install a vertical grab bar at
the rim of your bathtub or
shower to help you get in
and out.

2

Install a horizontal, angled
or L-shaped bar along the
back wall of your bathtub
or shower to help keep your
balance while completing
challenging tasks like
leaning over to wash your
feet or sitting on a bath seat.

3

A "universal" grab bar
installation is shown in the
figure below and will meet
the needs of most people
for safer bathing. Consulting
with an Occupational
Therapist is helpful if you
have specific bathing
support requirements that
are not met by a universal
grab bar configuration.



1. For a horizontal or diagonal grab on the back wall, install 180 to 280 mm above bathtub rim.
2. Be sure your grab bar is at least 900mm (36") long.
3. Install the grab bar on the back wall 300mm from the control end of the bathtub.
4. For a vertical grab bar, install at the entry of the tub or shower, within 225 to 300mm of bathtub rim.
5. Be sure your grab bar is at least 900mm (36") long.
6. Install a vertical grab bar 600mm above finished floor or at = height of the bathtub rim for higher bathtubs.

References

1. Schellenberg et al. (2018) J Surg Res
2. Levine et al. (2021) Hum Factors
3. Stevens et al. (2014) Inj Epidemiol
4. De-Rosende-Celeiro et al. (2019) Plos One
5. King & Novak (2017) Am J Occup Ther
6. Gosine et al. (2021) J Biomech

Other Resources

1. EnABL Research:
<https://www.enablesearch.com>
2. Federal Home Accessibility Credit:
<https://bit.ly/3ne9Zmb>
3. March of Dimes Canada:
<https://bit.ly/3DL0Cks> Programme
4. D'Adaption de Domicile:
<https://bit.ly/3ARUd55>
5. CAOT Find an OT:
<https://caot.ca/site/findot>