

I'll be sticking to safety of the shower, thanks

Like Marmite, you are either a bath or a shower person.

DICK LUMSDEN knows which side he is on

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Imagine, if you will, standing on one leg, raising your other leg up two feet into the air, swinging it out to the side and then moving all of your weight to the hanging leg and dropping it down to the ground about six inches lower than your standing leg.

Then, imagine yourself doing it naked, covered in water and standing on a slippery floor. That's ridiculous isn't it? Why would any sane person attempt that? Yet that is precisely the situation you put yourself in every time you try to get out of a standard bathtub.

To be absolutely clear, I am not a bath person. Never have been, and as I get older and appreciate that the degree of difficulty is about the same as attempting a Triple Salchow, I never will be. Give me a walk-in shower every time.

I just don't buy all of the "immerse yourself in steaming hot luxury" nonsense.

First of all, the preparation time for that kind of escapism is ludicrous. Secondly, you lie there in a water filled white coffin facing the indignity of your exit as the water cools around you.

And the final straw for me is how difficult it is to actually reach around and wash all your bits.

Then there is the amount of water it takes to fill a bath up to be even remotely useful - something like 130 litres compared to the 32 litres you use in a typical four minute shower.

Admittedly I might have two showers in a day depending on how active I've been on the golf course, or how crushed I've been on the daily commute back to



■ Luxuriating in a bath is all very well, but then you have to get out of the tub... and it isn't always easy, says Dick Lumsden.

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minded chap. So I get the fact that baths have their place. Families with young children need a bath to scrub their offspring for instance.

And it is a fact, or so I'm told, that properties with baths hold their value more than those which just have a shower. So I get the fact that in most bathrooms, space is limited, so sticking a shower at one end of the bath is an ergonomic compromise.

And for me, that is where the problems start. I spend a lot of time in hotels where the "bathroom" is no more than a walled off square in the corner of the room... inevitably one side of it will have a short, but high sided bath which you have to clamber into to get a shower... and as you totter out slippery and vulnerable, you are faced with sharp edges all around.

I genuinely believe that there are far more deaths in hotel bathrooms than the industry would ever admit to as residents perform the naked and wet one legged tai chi movement, fall headlong onto the porcelain bidet and crack open their skull.

In every major city there is probably a whole industry around the discreet collection and disposal of wet bodies so that none of the other guests ever know.

Putting a shower inside a bath must have been the brainchild of one very sick minded product designer. Someone who revelled in the

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tantalisingly out of reach, then clambering overboard risking life and limb getting back onto firm ground.

In recent years, we have seen the rise of the walk-in bath for older people whose hips and knees won't allow them the luxury of a two foot lift and swing. But while I can see the logic, I just don't get the practicality.

Sitting there with the door closed waiting for the water to get up past your waist must take ages...and vice versa waiting for the water to drain away when you've finished and want to get out. Why not just buy a shower seat, walk in and sit down?

I know I am not alone in my fear of baths (or more accurately my fear of getting in and out). In a recent poll by YouGov, they discovered that more than 50% of those over 60, like myself, wouldn't go near a bath and prefer a walk-in shower. That compared with almost 50% of 18-24 year olds who, with the athleticism of the young, prefer to vault the bath walls and shower in the tub.

One thing is certain. We are all going to shuffle off our mortal coil at some point. I just don't want my exit to be in a slippery hotel room in Budapest with my head stuck down a bidet.

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■ **Dick Lumsden is Managing Director of Owl Marketing Solutions, one of the few companies specialising in marketing**