

# GatherBids

# Walk-in Tub Buyer's Guide



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## 1. Where To Start Looking

You've already made it this far, so obviously something sparked your interest. Whether it was a late night infomercial, a letter you received in the mail, or even a solicitor that called you on the phone... You're reading this Buyer's Guide wondering if a Walk-in Tub may solve a problem.

Now comes the daunting task of finding the right walk-in tub without being taken advantage of, so where do you start?

### Avoid Walk-in Tub Review Sites

That's right, avoid walk-in tub review sites like a plague! Most of these sites were built by smaller walk-in tub companies only looking to give themselves a boost. You'll find that nearly every walk-in tub review site touts a different company as the highest rated and pays little attention to the others... other than maybe a few words discouraging you from doing any further research on those companies.

We're not telling you to avoid reading reviews, as they can sometimes be very helpful. However, even legitimate review sites can get bombarded with negative reviews that aren't even actual customers. Look for websites that provide reviews on multiple types of products, not just walk-in bathtubs.

i.e. [Angies List](#)  
[Better Business Bureau](#)  
[My Senior Source](#)  
[ConsumerAffairs](#)

Start with some of the major Brand Name tubs (Safe Step, Jacuzzi®, Premier, etc...). These companies will set a great benchmark for product quality and features, and they've been around for longer than any of the small start-ups you may have already been approached by.

## **2. Determine Your Needs**

Have you already fallen and realized that the bathroom is truly the most dangerous room in your home? Is this just a preparation for the years to come?

Purchasing a walk-in bathtub can be much more than an investment in your safety, but an investment in your overall quality of life as well. You'll need to ask yourself plenty of questions about your current bathing habits or even your mobility.

### **Bathroom Safety Questions...**

- Do you have trouble getting into or out of the Tub/Shower?
- Have you ever slipped or fallen in the bathroom?
- Do you bathe as often as you should?
- Do you sometimes fear bathing?
- Does your family know about your bathing habits?

- Do you live with someone that could assist you if you fell?
- How high can you safely lift your leg without losing balance?
- Have you ever felt dizzy when getting into/out of your shower?

If any of the above is relevant to your situation, you may greatly benefit from the safety aspects of a walk-in bathtub.

### **Quality of Life Questions...**

- Do you suffer from arthritis?
- Do you currently have back/hip pain?
- Do you have frequent headaches?
- Do you have poor blood flow or circulatory problems?
- Do you have problems sleeping through the night?
- Do you have any stomach or digestive problems?
- Do you suffer from nerve issues related to diabetes?

The questions above are not a complete list, just a mere glimpse of the health problems that a hydrotherapy system (commonly found in walk-in tubs) can help to either soothe or cure. Many of those with debilitating arthritis and nerve damage have reported great success with hydrotherapy treatments from the comfort of their own home.

Most of our readers know that with age comes more medications. More medications lead to... you guessed it... even more medications. Many times these medications have side effects that are worse than the original symptoms and lead to a lower quality of life. Walk-in bathtubs with hydrotherapy systems may actually help to reverse some of these issues and give you a quality of life better than you've experienced in years.

### **3. What's Your Budget?**

This is a difficult subject for most people. As you get older, funds become more and more limited. Most of our readers are on Medicare and receive either Social Security payments, Pension, or a combination of both. With the cost of living going up almost every month, it can be extremely difficult to think about making a large purchase at this point in your life.

## What you should think about...

- Do you have an estate for your children/grandchildren?
- What would a Nursing Home cost if you were to have an accident?
- Have you protected your assets in case of an accident?
- Do you have Long Term Care Insurance?
- How much could you afford to spend per month?
- Who would take care of you if you had an accident?
- Could you afford an in-home nurse if insurance didn't pay?

If you can't afford a lump sum purchase price of a walk-in tub, don't be ashamed. There are many people that couldn't fathom spending more than \$500 on a single purchase, no matter how much they needed it.

**The good news**, there are financing options available that won't leave a burden for your children or grandchildren to worry about paying off. Many banks are offering **Unsecured Loans** on walk-in bathtubs now. This means that it's not tied to your existing assets and in the event of a non-payment, the debt will not be a burden to your family. Most reputable walk-in tub companies will have these types of financing options available for you, and can approve most credit situations.

A single accident and a trip to the nursing home can wipe out an entire estate, unless you have a good Long Term Care insurance policy. Unfortunately, most of our readers are already past the age or health condition necessary to get the protection of these specific types of insurance.

## 4. Should You Buy a Name Brand?

There are many benefits to buying a Name Brand walk-in tub. Most importantly... ***the warranty***. When you buy from a company that's been in

business for a while and is nationally recognized, you know that they've achieved this status by standing behind their products.

When buying a walk-in tub from a small dealer, you're not dealing directly with a manufacturer. This means that the dealer can easily drop the product line that you purchased and switch to something that yields more profit at the drop of a hat. Independent dealers have no say in what the manufacturer offers, or whether or not the manufacturer (usually overseas) backs their warranty.

## **Off Brand Warranties**

If you buy a product that was manufactured overseas and have a problem with it, you may find yourself without any recourse... even though you've got a fancy Lifetime Warranty to go with it.

If the Chinese company that made the walk-in tub goes out of business or changes names (very common), you have absolutely no recourse. Even if you forego the battle of getting your "Under Warranty" import tub repaired, you'll likely be fighting another losing battle when attempting to locate parts. --- See **"Repairing Your Tub"** below

## **Repairing Your Tub**

**Major Brand** - Let's say that you've purchased a walk-in tub from a Name Brand company and something breaks. Even though the company probably has a pretty extensive warranty on their products... it's just your luck that the component that broke was not covered. Since the company you purchased from is also the manufacturer, you've got a direct line to the parts supplier. You're just a phone call away from getting the parts required to fix your walk-in tub.

**Off Brand** - Now, let's say hypothetically that you've purchased a tub from a company called BubbleSafe. It's only been two years since your purchase, so you call the office to inform them of the problem (under lifetime warranty). Upon calling, you realize that BubbleSafe is no longer in business, but the warranty wasn't through BubbleSafe anyways, it was

through ChaingShong Mfg. in Mianyang, Sichuan, China. You can either attempt to call ChaingShong and explain your problem, or contact your local plumber to start removing your two year old walk-in tub.

## **5. Common Complaints**

Although most of those that purchase a walk-in tub are quite happy with their purchase, there are those that voice their complaints. Some complaints we've read are perfectly valid, whereas some are just ridiculous.

### **No Hot Water**

If you've previously had hot water running to your bathtub/shower, your plumbing is still delivering it just the same as it was before. For many folks, it's been years since they've actually used the full capacity of the water heater to take a bath. Although it used to work fine... that may have been several years before the sediment built up to give you a capacity of only 20 gallons.

**Solution:** Always plan on replacing your hot water heater with a new higher efficiency and larger capacity water heater. It will add value to your home and save money on your utility bill at the same time. It's a win/win!

### **Tub Jets Spray Water Everywhere**

Just like a traditional hot tub, a jetted tub will spurt water when the water level is either too low or the person in the tub is moving (displacing water). If you move around in a traditional tub, you create waves. If you lean forward to grab something on the other end of the tub, you've created a void behind you allowing the jets to spray into the air.

**Solution:** Only turn the therapy jets on when you plan on sitting and relaxing. If you must reach for something, turn the jets off prior to sitting forward. This will prevent water from spraying outside of the tub.

### **Takes Too Long to Fill**

There are a couple of different factors that come into play here. The first of which would be your plumbing that runs to the faucet. If you have small supply lines, it will take longer to fill. The next realization is that unlike before when you turned the water on and left the bathroom while it filled, you have to enter the tub prior to turning the water on. Just like watching a clock, although it takes the same amount of time as your old tub... it may seem twice as long.

**Solution:** Make sure the tub you choose has a heated seat or jets that can be turned on once the lower portion has been filled (around your legs). That way you can start enjoying the benefits without having to wait for the entire tub to fill.

### **Takes Too Long to Drain**

Similar to the one above "Takes Too Long to Fill", you probably used to just pull the plug and walk away. Thus, you probably never realized how long it took to drain your tub.

**Solution:** Make sure the installer checks your drain size prior to installing the tub. A smaller drain means a longer drain time, whereas a larger clean drain can drain most tubs in a minute or less.

### **Shoddy Installation**

This one is all too common, but could be easily avoided. People complain of the work not being completed properly or being done sloppily. Caulking not done right or even paint not being finished. **This is the Number 1 complaint of walk-in bathtubs.**

**Solution:** There are many ways to research your installer prior to having your tub installed. **Ask for references** first, then decide if you want to use a different installer. As for the paint, expect to repaint your bathroom if drywall work needs done. You cannot expect for any installer to be able to match your colors. However, if you happen to have a can laying around... some installers would be more than happy to touch it up for you.

## **6. What About Installation?**

Installation is entirely up to you, although it's recommended that you stay with the company you're purchasing from. They're more likely to know the ins and outs and potential problems with installing these tubs in certain situations.

Don't ever let a company tell you that you are unable to use a different installer. The caveat to this is that most companies will not keep the warranty the same if it is not installed by them (Larger Companies). This is perfectly normal and completely understandable, as they are the ones backing the product with a guarantee.

## **7. How Important Is The Warranty?**

A warranty is only as good as the company that backs it. With that being said, a Lifetime Warranty by a local company probably isn't going to compare with a Lifetime Warranty by a nationally recognized company.

It's important that you read the fine print of the warranty. Although it may take a while to go through, the sales person you're working with should be more than willing to provide you with these details. If the warranty doesn't specify everything that the company is covering, the warranty is as worthless as the piece of paper it's written on.

Rule of thumb... if a National Brand warranties their pumps/motors for 5 years, you can bet that the motor will probably go out at 5 years 1 month. If a National Brand warranties their tub for 1 year, you can bet that 13 months down the road, you'll be starting to have some problems.

Although many import products will come with a "Lifetime Warranty," you'll certainly recognize after reading it that it's only worth its weight in paper.

Ready to start shopping?

[Get a Quote](#) from the Top Rated Company