

by James_Dulley

Dear Jim: I want to use filtered water to remove chlorine when bathing and showering. Installing a whole-house filtering system is expensive and seems wasteful. Is there any way to filter just the bath water? - Jerome H.

Dear Jerome: When people think about filtering and purifying the water in their homes, they usually think about water used for drinking and cooking. Actually, the exposure to chemicals in water is also significant when hot water is flowing over your body and you are breathing the warm water vapor. Free chlorine in the air may produce possible carcinogenic hazards.

Although the chlorine concentration in water decreases as it travel through the water mains to your home, its final concentration in specific homes varies. Filtering all the water in the house can be an expensive proposition, both for the equipment and the operating costs. Depending upon the type of whole-house system, one can also consume large quantities of water or electricity.

One of the most effect and reasonably priced options for removing chlorine is a shower filter. It mounts on the showerarm and the showerhead screws onto it. You can install your existing showerhead on it or purchase a unit with a showerhead attached. The chlorine filter has a negligible impact upon the force of the water from the showerhead.I have tested many of them in my own home and have definitely felt a difference in the reduced dryness of my hair and skin. I found the models with an attached adjustable massaging showerhead work the best. The massaging action is comfortable at times, but you can also turn the knob to get a fine spray to save water when lathering.

The most effective type of shower filter uses a KDF element. This is made of fine particles of pure zinc and copper. The combination of these two metals produces an oxidation/reduction reaction to neutralize the chlorine. Most of the filter manufacturers use a KDF element and some also include a carbon or other material

for removing specific chemicals or particles.

Each manufacturer's filter has a unique design and the sizes vary, but you can expect to get between 1,000 and 2,000 showers per filter depending upon the water and the length of shower. The filter housings are made in two piece which unscrew to install the new filter element. You should be able to notice from the feel of your skin when it is time to replace the element.

If you prefer to take baths, a bath ball filter is available. This is a perforated plastic ball with a round KDF filter inside of it. It has a hook or rope to hang it from the bathtub spout so the water flows through it as it fills the bathtub.

The following companies offer shower/bath filters: CUZN Water Filtration, (800) 345-7873, www.cuzn.com; H2O International, (800) 570-3464, www.h2ofilter.com; Rainshow'r, (800) 243-8775, www.rainshowermfg.com; Sante, (800) 398-6735, www.santeforhealth.com; and Waterwise, (800) 874-9028, www.waterwise.com.

Dear Jim: I have been trying to compare prices for new furnaces, but I cannot seem to find basic equipment prices. Is there some reason I always hear I have to get actual quotes from contractors instead? - Kelly W.

Dear Kelly: You will realize the pricing problem when you talk with several contractors. They all may not even recommend the same size furnace for your home. Some may also recommend replacing some of the ductwork which increases the cost.

Some other options can significantly impact the cost. Installing a variable-speed blower motor instead of a standard one can cost hundreds of dollars more. A high-quality central air cleaner can also add several hundred dollars.

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