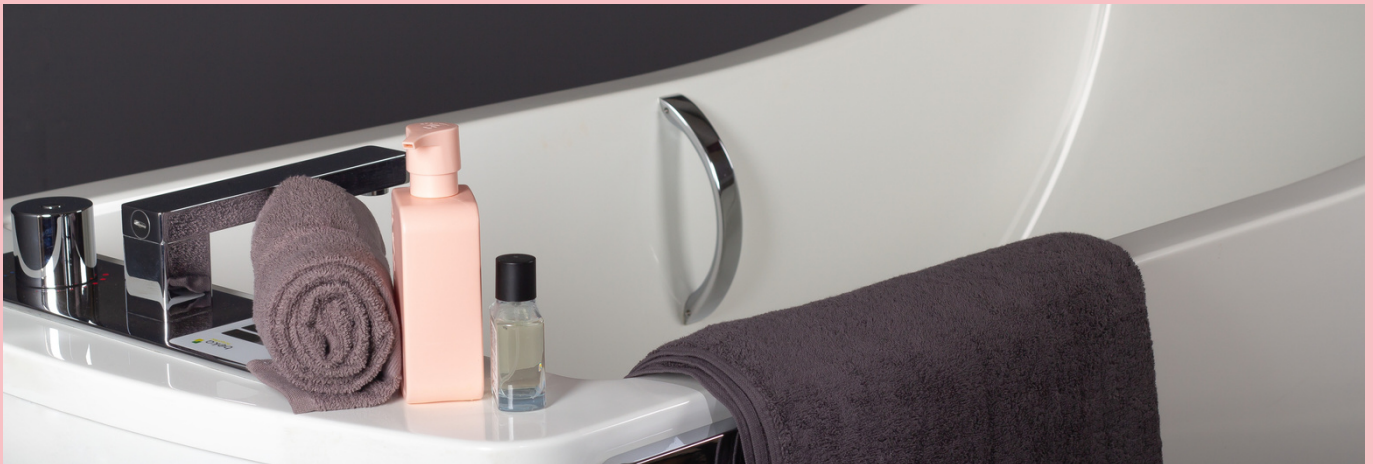


Bathroom Adaptations & Muscular Dystrophy:

Key Considerations for Occupational Therapists and Specifiers



Introduction

Muscular dystrophy is a group of progressive conditions that cause muscle weakness over time. As strength, mobility, and endurance change, so too do the requirements for safe and effective use of the bathroom environment.

There is no single “correct” solution.

The right approach depends on:

- The stage and progression of the condition
- Muscle strength and fatigue levels
- Postural control and positioning needs
- Respiratory function (where relevant)
- Level of support from carers
- The layout and constraints of the home

The key priority is creating a safe, adaptable bathroom environment that supports comfort, dignity, and independence - while minimising fatigue and physical strain.

Our Approach

At Astor Bannerman, we work closely with Occupational Therapists, families, and care teams to design bathroom environments that adapt as needs change.

With muscular dystrophy, requirements are rarely static. Equipment and layout must not only meet current needs, but also anticipate future changes - supporting independence for as long as possible, while ensuring safety throughout.

Core Considerations



1. Fatigue & Energy Conservation

- Everyday tasks, including washing, toileting, and transfers, can be physically demanding
- The environment should reduce effort where possible
- Seated or supported activities are often more appropriate

2. Progressive Muscle Weakness

- Muscle strength typically declines over time
- Tasks such as stepping into a bath, standing at a basin, or repositioning may become more difficult
- Adaptations should allow for increasing levels of support



3. Positioning & Postural Support

- Reduced trunk control may affect safe sitting and stability
- Proper support is essential for comfort, safety, and function
- Consider head, neck, and limb support

4. Transfers & Manual Handling

- Transfers are likely to become more complex over time
- Risk to both the individual and carers must be considered
- Solutions may need to evolve from assisted transfers to full hoisting

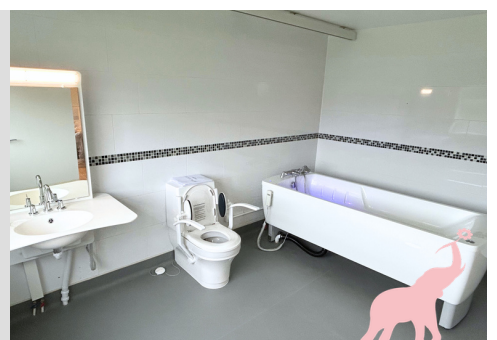


5. Skin Integrity

- Reduced mobility increases the risk of pressure damage
- Appropriate surfaces, positioning, and routines are important
- Bathroom design should support safe and effective personal care

6. Space & Accessibility

- Sufficient space for carers and equipment is essential
- Layout should accommodate wheelchairs, hoists, and multiple carers where needed
- Early planning allows for smoother future adaptations
- Equipment & Adaptation Options: Benefits & Considerations



Equipment

Options: Benefits & Considerations

There is no “correct” solution - only the one that best fits the individual, their home, and their care plan.



Bathing / Showering Solutions

Options may include:

- Height-adjustable baths
- Powered seats or platforms
- Assisted showering

Considerations:

- Managing fatigue during bathing
- Safe transfers in and out
- Positioning and support throughout
- Balancing therapeutic benefit with practicality

Washing & Basin Solutions

Options may include:

- Height-adjustable washbasins
- Wheelchair-accessible designs

Considerations:

- Supporting independence where possible
- Allowing seated or standing use
- Ensuring ease of access and usability

Changing & Personal Care

Options may include:

- Height-adjustable changing tables
- Supportive surfaces for personal care

Considerations:

- Safe working height for carers
- Comfort and dignity for the individual
- Adequate space for assistance
- Toileting & Hygiene Solutions

Toilets

Options may include:

- Accessible WCs
- Wash/dry toilets
- Support rails and positioning aids

Considerations:

- Level of independence
- Transfer method
- Ease of cleaning and hygiene
- Hoisting & Transfer Systems

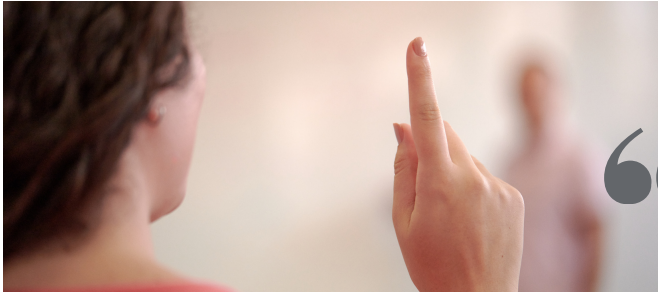
Hoisting and Transfers

Options may include:

- Ceiling track hoists
- Portable hoists
- Powered bath seats

Considerations:

- Space and layout
- Carer capability and training
- Comfort and safety during transfers



The Key Question...

When planning a bathroom adaptation, ask:

How will this space continue to work for this individual as their needs change?

Key Takeaway

No single product or adaptation makes a bathroom “right” for someone with muscular dystrophy.

The best outcomes come from:

- Early planning
- Flexible, adaptable solutions
- Thoughtful design
- Ongoing support
- A clear understanding of change over time



Clinical Disclaimer

This guidance is intended to support discussion and informed decision-making. It does not replace clinical assessment or individual medical advice.

Equipment selection for individuals with epilepsy must always be based on a comprehensive risk assessment, the person’s documented care plan, and consultation with appropriate healthcare professionals.

Astor Bannerman does not provide medical advice but works collaboratively with Occupational Therapists, clinicians, and care teams to support safe, person-centred bathroom design.

