



Shower Chair: Comfort & Support During Recovery

Medical disclaimer (please read): This guide is for general educational purposes only and is not medical advice. Your surgeon, physical therapist, or clinician can tell you when it's safe to shower and what equipment and bathing precautions are appropriate for your specific procedure, incision care, mobility restrictions, and recovery plan.

A shower chair provides a stable seat for bathing. During recovery—especially when you feel weak, unsteady, or are asked to limit standing—it can make showers more manageable by reducing fatigue and lowering slip-and-fall risk in a wet bathroom.

When a shower chair is commonly used

People often consider a shower chair when their care team recommends extra stability or limiting standing time—especially during early recovery after:

- Hip replacement or other hip procedures
- Knee replacement or other knee procedures
- Back/spine procedures (e.g., laminectomy, discectomy, spinal fusion)
- Shoulder or arm surgery (when reaching, balancing, or using mobility aids is difficult)
- Bariatric/weight-loss surgery
- Abdominal surgery (e.g., hernia repair, C-section, tummy tuck)
- Mastectomy or other breast surgery
- Foot, ankle, or leg surgery
- Any recovery plan where standing for long periods is unsafe or discouraged

Potential benefits (for many users)

A shower chair may help you:

- Reduce slip-and-fall risk in wet conditions
- Limit standing time to protect healing areas and joints
- Decrease fatigue and strain during bathing

- Feel more confident and independent with daily hygiene
- Make caregiver assistance easier and safer when help is needed

How a shower chair can support safer bathing

Depending on the model and your setup, a shower chair can:

- Provide a steady, non-slip seat for washing while seated
- Allow height adjustments to support a more comfortable sit-to-stand transfer
- Work well with a handheld showerhead to reduce overreaching
- Help you pace your shower and conserve energy during early recovery
- Support safer bathing when combined with other bathroom safety tools (as appropriate), such as grab bars

Safety note (important)

Safety disclaimer: Use only as directed by the manufacturer. Confirm the chair's weight capacity, ensure all height-adjustment pins are fully engaged, and verify the chair is stable on a flat surface before each use. If you feel dizzy, weak, or unsure about transfers, ask for assistance. Follow your clinician's instructions for incision/dressing care and when showering is permitted.

Quick setup + safety checklist

- Choose the right type: A shower chair/stool may work for walk-in showers; a transfer bench may be safer for stepping over a tub wall.
- Verify weight capacity: Select a model rated for the user's weight and needs (bariatric models if appropriate).
- Adjust height evenly: Set the legs to the same height so all feet contact the floor and the seat does not rock.
- Check stability: Place the chair on a flat surface; avoid thick, squishy mats under the chair that can cause wobble.
- Use the brakes (if applicable): For rolling shower chairs, lock brakes during transfers.
- Set up reach items: Keep soap, shampoo, and towels within easy reach to avoid twisting or standing suddenly.
- Reduce slip risk: Use a non-slip mat outside the shower, and dry the floor promptly to prevent slipping when exiting.
- Plan transfers: Do a "dry run" transfer (fully clothed, no water running) the first time to confirm the setup feels stable.
- Clean and inspect: Rinse off soap residue and check feet, bolts, and pins regularly for wear or looseness.

💡 **Helpful Tip:** Pairing a shower chair with a handheld showerhead (and a simple shower caddy placed at seated height) can reduce overreaching and make it easier to stay seated throughout the shower. For the first few showers after surgery, consider having someone nearby in case you feel lightheaded or need help with transfers.

Information provided by: AfterSurgerySupplies.com