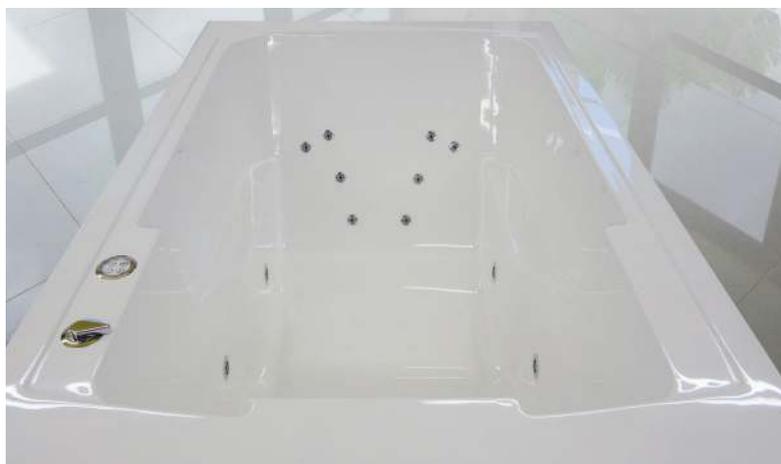


# Guide to Choosing a Hydrotherapy Bath

Choosing the right hydrotherapy bath can be challenging, especially if you haven't previously owned one. We've spent decades designing and manufacturing luxury jetted baths so, in this guide, we've listed what we believe are the most important factors to consider when making a selection.

Taking the time to get it right is important; the best hydrotherapy baths should deliver excellent value for money and years of trouble-free relaxation. In a relatively short time, they should also yield appreciable benefits to health.



## What is a Hydrotherapy Bath?

A hydrotherapy bath is any bath that has been designed to incorporate a hydrotherapy system. All but five of our own range of baths have been designed in this way. They will readily accommodate a pump, pipework and water jets, together with their associated controls, which are available in either manual or electronic formats.

Hydrotherapy itself is a proven healthcare treatment, often used in physiotherapy to aid recovery from injuries. It is a form of warm water-based massage which, like traditional hand-massage, is capable of achieving a real therapeutic effect. By directing jets of water at specific muscles and soft tissue, it stimulates blood circulation and helps to reduce fluid retention. It can help to relieve pain, tiredness and muscle tension, speed recovery, and improve/maintain joint mobility.

In a hydrotherapy bath, air and hot water are mixed and then pumped through nozzles in the sides and ends of the bath. The resulting combination of heat and pressure is key to the efficacy of the system.

However, hydrotherapy baths vary greatly in design and performance. Some are little more than baths with the facility to create bubbles – a showy waste of money – so it's important to understand the factors that distinguish the good from the bad.

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# How to Choose the Best Hydrotherapy Bath

The first and most important factor to consider when choosing a hydrotherapy bath is to be sure that the bath has been purpose-designed to accommodate a hydrotherapy system. Pumps and jets *can* be retro-fitted to existing baths but when you're matching components that weren't intended to work together, there's always a risk of leaks and other accidents. Where water and electricity are concerned, it's better not to take any chances.

A bath designed to host a hydrotherapy system will have internal walls that include flat sections. This is simply because it's much easier to get a tight, reliable seal on a flat surface than a curved one. There are five baths in the Cabuchon range that have continuously curving interiors and, for this reason, we don't recommend them as hydrotherapy baths. All our other baths have been designed to accommodate the necessary components.

## Factory-fitting:

Another important benefit of a purpose-designed hydrotherapy bath is that all its components will be factory-fitted and rigorously tested before despatch. Fitting a hydrotherapy system in a controlled factory environment is likely to ensure far higher quality standards and greater reliability than a system that has been retro-fitted on site in a customer's bathroom.



## Dimensions:

The further a water jet has to travel, the more energy it will lose, the less focused the jet, and the less precisely it can be targeted. For these reasons, the best hydrotherapy baths will be relatively narrow – putting the water jets close to the bather's body. This helps to ensure effective heat-transfer and a proper massaging action.

## Precise Targeting:

For maximum effectiveness, water jets should be directed at specific muscle groups – typically in the back, shoulders, neck, legs and feet. The placement of nozzles is therefore crucial. Indeed, the world's very best hydrotherapy systems are always custom designed for the individual user, taking into account his or her size and physique. The number and layout of nozzles can then be planned and fitted accordingly.



A bespoke solution will always offer the best results but if more than one person is to use a hydrotherapy bath, then it's obviously important to be able to change the direction of the nozzles manually. Look for 'eyeball' type nozzles that can easily be swivelled and adjusted without the need for tools.

## Nozzle Design:

In the 1990s, when we developed the world's first modern deep soaking tubs, we saw their obvious suitability for use as hydrotherapy baths. (For details, please see our blog: [Convergent Technologies](#).) At the time, hydrotherapy jets had large, rounded nozzles that sat proud of the bath walls, rather than lying flush as they do today. This made them rather uncomfortable, unlike their modern counterparts, which shouldn't interfere at all with the contoured lines of the bath.

Nevertheless, if you get the chance to visit the manufacturer before purchasing, it's likely to be time well spent. Only by sitting in a bath will you get a true sense of how comfortable it is and whether the nozzles detract from that.



### Control System:

A hydrotherapy system should be easily controllable, delivering anything from a gentle massage to a vigorous toning action. The pressure and temperature should be easy to adjust, and the system should also allow water to be diverted from one end to another to focus the effect wherever it is most needed. Without this versatility, a hydrotherapy bath will be of little long-term value, so make sure you choose a system that you can control as you wish.



For those on a tight budget, good quality manual (pneumatic) controls offer a reasonable level of adjustment. However, electronic controls offer greater versatility and a number of useful extra features.

### Useful features to look for include:

- A simple multifunctional electronic touchpad.
- A level sensor. This prevents operation if there isn't enough water in the system.
- An adjustable hot air booster. This adjusts the power of the system's massaging effect.
- A hot air blow-dryer system. This automatically dries the pipework after use; an important hygiene / safety feature.
- An air zone diverter. This controls airflow between the two ends of the bath; the hydrotherapy effect can be pushed to just one end, or the two ends can be kept in balance.

A good hydrotherapy bath will have a flat area on its deck surface where hydrotherapy controls can be mounted. They should be secure and easily accessible from the usual bathing position.

### Noise:

No bathing experience benefits from a noisy pump or pipes that rattle and vibrate. Ideally, ask for a live demonstration or, failing that, try to find customer testimonials attesting to the quietness of the system.

### Hygiene and Safety:

If water is left to pool in pipework after the hydrotherapy bath has been used, it may start to smell or allow germs to spread. A good hydrotherapy bath will be designed with self-draining pipes, all of which empty freely out of the pump waste drain.

Warning signs are horizontally affixed pipes with sections that sag, and water that escapes through the eyeball jets after the system has been turned off. In hard water areas, some nozzles develop staining where water dribbles out and down the inside of the bath. To avoid the risk of buying a hydrotherapy bath that becomes unsightly or a breeding ground for micro-organisms, ask to see the pipework.



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Another useful feature is an internal air dryer, which blows warm air through the pipes after use. On its own, it won't counteract the effects of sagging pipework but, in a well-designed system, it will help to maintain the highest standards of safety and hygiene.

#### **Power:**

Avoid the temptation to install more nozzles than you need. There is no point in simply creating frothy water. The more nozzles the bath has, the more powerful its pump needs to be, and that adds to the total cost. A typical minimum number of water jets might be around a dozen, symmetrically designed to keep the system balanced. In such cases, a single pump will usually be adequate, but in a big 32-jet system, a second pump might be necessary to maintain the necessary power. Talk to the bath designer about how many jets you really need and make sure that the pump will be up to the job.

#### **Compactness:**

If your bath is to be set into a surround, choose a system of pipework and cables that fits snugly against the undersides of the bath. A stray pipe snagging during installation could be a costly accident, so look for designs that keep such risks to a minimum.



#### **Extras:**

To deliver real value for money, a hydrotherapy bath should be capable of producing a genuine therapeutic effect. If you ever suffer from aches, stiffness or an injury, you'll appreciate the benefits of a truly effective system.

However, hydrotherapy baths are also about relaxation and luxury, so it's worth taking a moment to consider whether there are any extras that you'd like your bath to incorporate. One commonly chosen example is a chromotherapy system; one or more coloured lights that are built into the bath and offer a range of colour choices to create different moods.

An inline water heater is another popular choice. This cycles existing bathwater through a thermostatically controlled heater to maintain it at a steady temperature. This permits long soaks without the need to partially empty the bath and top it up with hot water. As a result, it helps save water and energy, and adds to a sense of relaxation.

Modern electronics mean that a bather can now enjoy all his or her favourite music in the bath. Speakers affixed to the underside of the bath turn it into a giant sound-box, producing an excellent sound quality. The system is Bluetooth-enabled, so music can be cast to it from a phone, laptop or any other suitably equipped device.



#### **Guarantees:**

A hydrotherapy bath is a significant investment so do all you can to ensure you're buying something that's made to last. Guarantees and warranties are a good indication of reliability, so ask for details in advance of any purchase.

Cabuchon bathtubs themselves carry a 25-year guarantee and their associated hydrotherapy systems come with a lifetime guarantee on pipe-work and jointing. This includes the assurance that each system complies with the standards and regulations (regarding building, plumbing and electrical safety) applicable in the country in which it is to be installed.

#### **More Information:**

For more information or technical advice, please contact our customer support team:

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