



Did you know 40% of Brits think smart home technology has improved their standard of living?*



Smart bathrooms: is your space up to date?

Could better technology be the thing we all need in order to modernise our sanitaryware? Yvette Murrell takes a look

I feel like everywhere I look, smart technology has wriggled its way in. I start the day by asking my Google Assistant for the weather before I make coffee using an app on my phone – so my ideal cup is brewed before I even get into the kitchen. In the living area, I can sit back and pick from a plethora of options on my smart TV or listen to the 24-hour news through a Wifi-connected speaker.

But as I head to the bathroom for a shower, my morning routine becomes comparatively more laborious – so I decided to investigate. We all know water and electricity don't mix, so I initially thought there would be few products for the bathroom. But I was pleasantly surprised to discover fixtures with integrated smart technology to help make our morning and evening routines easier or enjoyable.

One of the brands that caught my eye was Lithe Audio, which has designed built-in speakers suitable for bathrooms. They can be connected to your Wifi, so you can play your favourite

tunes via streaming services such as Spotify or Deezer – perfect as backup while singing in the shower. (Or is that just me?) Rated IP44, they are not safe for directly inside the cubicle, but can be fitted as close as 60cm outside of it.

I also spotted shower toilets designed to make a trip to the loo all the more pleasant, with customisable bidet-style wash settings, nightlights, and heated seats. This type of sanitaryware has been around since the 1980s and brands including Toto and Geberit offer further features – from adjustable drying settings to integrated deodorisers and automatic opening and closing for hands-free use. But what stands out for me right now are models such as the Axent.One Plus, from Crosswater, whose functions – from washing to

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drying – can be operated via the accompanying Smart Control app. Now, these are pricier – but more hygienic, too, and modern flushes save on water, which is something we should all be trying to do around the home.

Similarly, digital showers are not particularly new, but smarter designs can be personalised by choosing the length and temperature of your shower or having it warm up by using an app while you're still in bed. Convenient, yes, but beneficial too – especially if you live in a multi-generational home with the little ones and elderly parents under one roof, as setting the perfect temperature – not too hot, not too cold – right away can prevent accidental scalding. Showers such as the Mira Mode Maxim even have bath fill option.

But what really drew my attention was SmarTap's voice-controlled shower. Integrating seamlessly with the likes of Amazon Echo or Google Home, you can personalise each family member's experience by saving



their favourite flow strength, for example. I'd like to say “Hey Google, please get my shower started” as part of my morning routine – wouldn't you? Maybe bathrooms can be smarter than I thought. **KBB**

1. The SmarTap shower system, from £886.97, can be controlled via your smartphone.
2. Lithe Audio's IP44 Wifi speaker, £429.99 for a pair.
3. The Axent.One Plus shower toilet by Crosswater, from £4895.

*Source: Thomas Sanderson