

A mirror can look generous in a product photo and still feel cramped above a real bathroom basin. The key is not simply whether it fits between two walls. You need to consider the usable wall width, the mirror margin sides, nearby fittings and how the mirror will work for the people using the bathroom every day.

For landlords and property managers, there is another question: does the bathroom need a full renovation, or could a carefully chosen mirror and lighting upgrade make it feel fresher without disturbing the layout? In many bathrooms, keeping the basin and plumbing where they are avoids unnecessary cost, disruption and scope creep.



This guide explains how to measure the space, assess visual balance and test a mirror size before ordering. It also covers tenant-first usability, lighting and when to stop short of a wider refurbishment.

Start with the usable wall width, not the room width

The width of the bathroom is rarely the right measurement. What matters is the clear, usable wall area directly above the basin. That area may be reduced by a return wall, a shower screen, a door architrave, a wall cabinet, a tiled border or a light fitting.

Measure the section of wall where the mirror can actually sit. Take the measurement at basin height and again higher up if the wall has a slope, boxing or other obstruction. If the available width changes, use the narrowest practical measurement when choosing the mirror.

Then measure the basin or vanity. A useful starting point is to choose a mirror that is narrower than the basin or vanity, leaving a visible margin on both sides. The exact margin depends on the room, but a few centimetres on each side often gives the mirror a deliberate, centred appearance. Treat this as a visual guide rather than a fixed rule: a tiny cloakroom and a wide double vanity will need different proportions.

Check the full installation zone

Before deciding that a mirror fits, check for anything that could affect installation or daily use:

- Wall lights, shaver sockets, switches and extractor controls.
- Cabinet doors, shelves or bathroom doors that swing towards the mirror.

- Tile edges, recessed shelves and boxed-in pipework.
- The tap, basin splash zone and any unusually high or low basin position.
- Fixing points and the type of wall behind the finish.

A mirror may fit between the walls but still crowd a wall light or sit awkwardly over a tap. Measure around the whole installation area, not just the largest empty rectangle you can see.

Use mirror margin sides to judge visual balance

Mirror margin sides are the visible gaps between the mirror and the nearest edges around it, particularly the basin or vanity edges and any adjacent wall or fitting. Those gaps help the mirror feel placed rather than squeezed in.

Stand back and imagine a vertical line rising from each side of the basin or vanity. A mirror that is slightly narrower will often feel balanced because it relates clearly to the furniture below. A mirror that is much wider can appear to float beyond the basin, especially if it nearly reaches a corner or overlaps a nearby fitting visually.

That does not mean a mirror must always be narrower than the basin. A wide, wall-to-wall mirror can work in a planned design, and a broad mirror above a double vanity may be entirely appropriate. The question is whether the width looks intentional and whether the edges have enough breathing room.



What you see	What it may indicate	What to try
Very small gaps at both sides	The mirror may look squeezed into the available wall.	Try a narrower size or check whether a different shape gives more breathing room.
Unequal gaps on each side	The basin, wall or fittings may not be centred.	Choose the main feature to align with and test the mirror position on the wall.
The mirror extends far beyond a small basin	The proportions may feel top-heavy or disconnected.	Compare a narrower mirror, or check whether the vanity width provides a better reference.
Comfortable gaps with clear access to fittings	The size is likely to be practical and visually balanced.	Confirm height, fixing requirements and lighting before ordering.

Try a paper template before you buy

A paper template is one of the simplest ways to avoid ordering a mirror that looks wrong once it is on the wall. It lets you assess scale in the actual bathroom, where tile lines, lighting and other fittings can change how the proportions feel.

1. Check the product's exact width and height, including any frame or edge detail.
2. Cut newspaper, lining paper or cardboard to the mirror dimensions. Join pieces with tape if needed.
3. Mark the proposed centre line above the basin or vanity.
4. Use masking tape to attach the template to the wall. Avoid tape that could damage paint or a delicate surface.
5. Step back to the bathroom doorway and check the view from the usual standing position.
6. Check that taps, switches, lights, cupboards and door swings remain unobstructed.
7. Mark the fixing points only after confirming the position and checking what is behind the wall.

Look at the template with the bathroom lights on and off. If possible, ask someone who uses the bathroom regularly to stand at the basin and check the proposed height and width. A tenant's day-to-day view is more useful than judging the mirror only from the doorway.

Think tenant-first: width is only one part of usability

A mirror should work for the people using the bathroom, not just fill the wall attractively. Consider whether someone of different heights can see themselves comfortably, whether there is enough space for normal handwashing and whether the mirror is easy to clean around.

In a shared house, the bathroom may be used by several tenants with different routines. A mirror that is too low, too high or crowded against a light can be a daily irritation. Check that the basin remains easy to reach, the mirror does not obstruct storage access and any controls or sockets remain accessible.

Think about maintenance as well. A mirror positioned close to the tap may be exposed to more splashes and water marks. A large mirror can be harder to handle during installation and replacement. For a rental, a well-sized, securely installed mirror that is simple to clean is often a better choice than the largest option available.

Choose refresh or full renovation before changing the layout

If the basin works, the plumbing is sound and the tiles are in reasonable condition, a bathroom refresh may be enough. Replacing an old mirror with a better-proportioned model and improving the lighting can make the room feel substantially more modern without moving pipework or disturbing tile finishes.

A full renovation may be justified if there are persistent leaks, failed waterproofing, damaged tiles, poor ventilation, unsafe electrics or a layout that genuinely prevents comfortable use. But changing the basin position just to make a wider mirror possible can create avoidable work: plumbing alterations, patching, retiling, decorating and additional downtime for tenants.

Keep the layout where it already works

Before approving a layout change, ask whether the proposed improvement can be achieved with the basin and plumbing left in place. Keeping the existing layout can help control costs and reduce the number of trades involved. It also makes scheduling easier in an occupied property, where bathroom downtime affects tenants directly.

If the mirror feels too wide, try a smaller size or a different shape before moving fixtures. If the wall itself is awkward, a narrower mirror with strong lighting may give a better result than a wider mirror that triggers tile and plumbing work.

Mirror lighting can be the highest-impact upgrade

In many dated bathrooms, poor lighting is more noticeable than the mirror's exact width. A well-lit mirror can improve the feel and usefulness of the basin area without changing the room's footprint. Integrated LED lighting can provide a cleaner look and more even illumination than relying on a single ceiling light, particularly when the existing light leaves faces in shadow.

Lighting should support everyday tasks as well as appearance. Consider whether the light is bright enough for shaving or applying make-up, whether it creates glare, and whether the colour tone suits the rest of the bathroom. Check the product specification and arrange electrical work through a suitably qualified electrician where required. Bathroom electrical zones and installation requirements matter; do not assume that any mirror can be connected anywhere.

For a rental refresh, improving the mirror lighting may deliver more noticeable value than making the mirror several centimetres wider. It can also let you retain the existing basin, tiles and plumbing, keeping the work focused and easier to hand over.

Use a calculator, then confirm on the wall

The LED Mirror World mirror size calculator page can be a useful starting point when comparing mirror dimensions with the basin or available wall area. Use it to narrow propertydata.co.uk down options, then check the chosen size in the room with a paper template. A calculator cannot account for every detail of your bathroom, such as a projecting tile edge, a light fitting or an off-centre basin.

When you are ready to compare products, LED Mirror World is a product supplier to consider. Check each product's dimensions, installation instructions, lighting details and electrical requirements before ordering. Confirm delivery access and whether the installation can be completed safely without damaging tiles or finishes.

A practical decision checklist

Before placing the order, work through these checks:

- Have you measured the usable wall width rather than the whole room?
- Does the mirror leave comfortable mirror margin sides?
- Does its width relate sensibly to the basin or vanity?
- Have you tested the outline with a paper template?
- Can tenants use the basin, fittings and storage without obstruction?
- Will the mirror's lighting improve the task area without glare?
- Can you keep the existing layout and avoid unnecessary plumbing or tile work?
- Have you checked the fixing method and electrical requirements?

Final thought

A mirror is probably too wide if it leaves almost no breathing room, crowds nearby fittings or feels disconnected from the basin below. But there is no single measurement that suits every bathroom. Measure the usable wall width, assess the mirror margin sides and visual balance, then test the outline in place before committing.

For many rental bathrooms, the best result comes from keeping a functional layout and making a targeted refresh. A correctly sized mirror with effective lighting can transform the basin area without turning a simple upgrade into a full renovation.

