



# Japanese Ofuro Tubs

## By Zen Bathworks

### Ofuro Installation And Care Guidelines

**Before getting started – Keep your new ofuro tub protected with the original wrap and packaging as long as possible while transporting, carrying and installing. Avoid touching the finished tub with dirty hands or tools.**

1. This style of ofuro tub is typically installed as a **freestanding tub**. Ofuros can be installed along a wall, in a corner, in an alcove, or recessed. Fill fixtures are not included. A simple floor drain is included. Air circulation around the tub is important – see the details below. We do not recommend using the ofuro as a combination shower/bathtub.
2. Our ofuro is designed to be **used like a typical bathtub** – filled with hot water for a bath, then drained afterward. Because the thick wood walls insulate and hold heat well there is very little heat loss during a bath. A cover will help hold the heat as well – allowing the same water to be used again within a couple of hours. We do not recommend a recirculating heating system for the ofuro because we believe that simply filling and draining is much more practical. However, if you require a recirculating heater, we can provide one.
3. A **good water heater** is important for supplying a sufficient volume of hot water to fill your bath. Consult your plumber about water flow rates and what will work best for your situation. Consider the “tankless” style heaters as they produce unlimited hot water.
4. **Bathroom floor:**  
There are two options for designing your tub area:  
“**Wet floor**”: The traditional ofuro takes full advantage of the depth of the tub by allowing the water to fill right to the rim. To do this the tub does not have an overflow drain and water is allowed to spill over the sides. If your ofuro does not have an overflow, it must be installed on a draining floor (sometimes called a wet floor or shower pan). This means the floor is designed with a waterproof membrane and with a slope to a drain. Trench or trough drains are recommended because they simplify the floor slope. Very often the Japanese bathroom includes an open shower in the same area.

“Dry floor”: In this case the floor is not designed to drain excess water to a drain. Choose the optional overflow drain if you do not want to install a wet floor. If an overflow drain is installed, then the tub can be installed on a regular bathroom floor that is water resistant.

5. **Tub Drain:** The drain provided is constructed of solid brass. Finish options are chrome, oil rubbed bronze or brushed nickel. Our recommendation for tubs without overflow drains: use a drain connection that is known as an “indirect drain” or a trough drain. This method is simple and can allow one drain to do two jobs – drain the tub and drain any floor water from the overflow. An indirect drain is often used in a commercial kitchen sink – meaning that the waste pipe below is oversized to accept the tub drain to easily slip inside. This makes installation very easy and has the advantage of allowing the tub to be moved for cleaning in the future. Floor should be sloped to the drain. The tub drain we supply is 1.5 inch NPT standard thread. About 1.5 inches of thread are exposed below the tub floor. The floor drain should be oversized to 3 or 4 inches to allow easy alignment and sufficient room around the smaller tub drain. Consult with a plumber about this for more information.
6. **Flush the water lines:** Plumbers MUST flush water lines with warm water for several minutes prior to filling the tub to remove construction debris such as flux, solder, glue, pvc, and metal shavings from all pipes. Failure to do this may result in tub stains.
7. **Floor and walls - airspace:** Your tub is designed to install directly on a finished floor. The rails attached to bottom of the tub allow for air circulation under the tub. If the floor is sloped, the tub can be leveled by shims under the rails or by scribing and trimming the rails themselves.

If you can, maintain at least ½ inch clearance from walls, avoiding contact with the wood of the tub. By doing so you will ensure the entire surface of the tub remains pristine. However, if you never plan on changing the location or orientation of your tub, you may strongly desire to put the tub up against wall(s) and to caulk the interfaces. While this is not recommended, it is something you can do. Just remember the surfaces of the tub which are put into contact with anything else may be marred, slightly discolored, etc. Also remember the beauty of all surfaces of the tub (interior and exterior) will be diminished if they are constantly wet or damp. Keeping the tub clean and maintaining good air circulation to the surfaces of the tub in between uses, is the best approach to maximize the life and beauty of your tub.

8. **In-floor heating:** In-floor heat under the tub is unnecessary and not recommended. Do not install in-floor radiant heat beneath your tub. Disable that heating zone if it is already in place. In-floor heating can be surrounding the tub area. Failure to do this will void the warranty. (we have never seen a problem with this, but as a precaution, it makes sense not to apply heat under the tub.)
9. **Ventilation:** One of the most important features of any bathroom is good ventilation to reduce that water vapor and humidity in the room after use. We strongly recommend a good quality bathroom fan that is on a 60 minute timer or an automatic humidity switch. This will ensure that excess moisture in the bathroom is removed. High humidity is the cause of mildew. We strongly recommend

- putting a top-quality ventilation fan in your tub area – such as the Panasonic Whisper fans.
10. **Exterior Maintenance:** The tub exterior is treated with multiple coats of Dalys Teak Oil in our shop. This is both a penetrating and sealing oil. Teak oil is available for purchase from general hardware stores, marine supply shops, etc. We recommend an annual recoating of any exterior surfaces that are easily reached. This will help preserve the beauty of the wood. Application is with a clean white cotton rag. This oil will dissolve and remove most exterior marks and stains.
  11. **Interior Maintenance:** The inside of the tub is left untreated! DO NOT treat the inside surfaces with any finish such as an oil, stain, or other coatings. Most common bath products such as salts and oils used in moderation are fine. We do not recommend using the wood ofuro as a “shower tub” due the high volume of shampoo, conditioner and soaps used in showering. Warning – there are many varieties of bath products and we cannot guarantee that all of them are safe to use with a wood tub. In general, a Japanese ofuro is used for a relaxing hot soak after showering. If you choose to use products in the water, we recommend giving the tub an extra rinse after each use.
  12. **Cleaning:** Rinsing after each use eliminates the need for cleaning. Good ventilation prevents mildew in your entire bathroom. If mildew is noticed, use a full-strength white vinegar and wipe onto the affected area. Let stand for 5 minutes and rinse. Inside stains or marks can always be sanded off with 120 grit sandpaper and a sanding block.
  13. **Typical use:** Fill the tub with hot water. Shower first, then soak in the ofuro. Drain completely afterwards.
  14. **Draining:** Drain the tub completely when finished. Rinse with the shower wand if available. Squeegee to the drain or towel the last bit of water. Turn on the bathroom fan for at least 60 minutes. If you follow this simple pattern, your tub will be simple to maintain.
  15. Failure to follow these instructions will void the tub warranty.
  16. **Most importantly - Enjoy your tub!** It will give you many years of pleasure.

## **Regular Use and Maintenance**

- 1 Zen Bathworks ofuros are designed to be used as a soaking tub after a cleansing shower. Soaps, shampoos and conditioners should not be used in an ofuro. Bath salts and essential oils used in small amounts are fine. The tub is intended to be filled with clean hot water for a single bath, then drained afterward.
- 2 After use the bath should be completely drained. A quick rinse of the tub with a handheld shower wand is recommended. While the floor is mostly flat, there is a depression around the drain to facilitate water drainage. Best practice is to use a simple bath squeegee to move the last bit of water to the drain. A bath towel can also be used to remove the last bit of water.
- 3 Proper ventilation to remove humidity in the bathroom area is important to prevent mildew in any bathroom. Mildew thrives in damp, still, and dark areas. If you

- provide good air ventilation, mildew will not be a problem. We recommend a good high-volume bathroom vent fan on a timer for at least 60 minutes after each use.
- 4 Interior surface cleaning: Normal cleaning the interior of the tub is done by simply rinsing with fresh water and drying. If disinfecting of the interior is required, natural white vinegar is best at full strength - wipe on and allow to work for 5 minutes. Rinse well and dry.
  - 5 If the interior needs more cleaning to remove residue, use warm water and mild dish soap and a soft bristle brush or cloth to clean, then rinse and dry.
  - 6 Inside small stains can be removed by light sanding with 120 grit sandpaper – with the grain direction. For larger stains, we recommend using Savogran wood bleach. Contact us for instructions on how to do this.
  - 7 Exterior surface cleaning: Normal cleaning of the exterior should be done with a simple damp cloth. If the exterior needs more than normal cleaning, use warm water with a small amount of mild soap and a soft cloth. Rinse and dry.
  - 8 Exterior stains can be removed by using Dalys Teak Oil, which is the finish used on the tub exterior. Wipe on a light coat with a clean white cotton cloth and allow to dry overnight.

## **Ofuro Warranty**

**Warranty information:** Zen Bathworks wooden ofuros are warranted against manufacturing defects only for 3 years of private residential use from the date of purchase. Warranty for commercial use is 1 year from date of purchase. This warranty does not cover: a) Labor charges and/or damages incurred in installation, repair, removal, or replacement, b) improper use of the tub, c) lack of proper maintenance, d) water damage caused by improper installation, e) damage caused by insufficient ventilation in the bath area, f) damage related to radiant heat systems, g) damage caused by water chemistry such as pH, hard water, h) damage caused by bath products used in the tub, i) water damage to surrounding areas due to improper catchment of overflow, j) labor charges, k) costs related to site plumbing code requirements. This warranty is void if any modifications are made to the tub – this includes but is not limited to: holes cut into the tub for plumbing, attachments to the tub walls or floor, modifications to the interior or exterior of the tub. If the tub needs repair under warranty, we reserve the right to repair in place or at our shop. The cost of shipping the tub for repair is not covered by warranty. This warranty is for the original purchaser only and is not transferable.

Contact us with questions:  
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