Older Dog Home Access Series

DIY Dog Ramp Plan Bundle

Bed and couch access planner with build notes, measurement tools, a cut-list system, traction guidance, and a ramp-vs-stairs decision sheet.

What is included

1) Quick-start planning notes
2) Measurement worksheet
3) Ramp or stairs decision sheet
4) Custom cut-list pages
5) Traction-surface guide
6) Build-day and load-test checklist

Who this is for

Owners planning a simple straight ramp for bed or couch access. Best for small to medium home projects where the ramp is floor-supported and used in a controlled indoor setting.

Use note: This bundle is a planning aid. It does not replace veterinary guidance, rehabilitation guidance, or a qualified builder for large/heavy dogs, unusual furniture heights, or custom freestanding designs.

Before you build

Check whether your dog can still manage a gentle incline without panic, dragging, or clear pain.

Measure the exact surface your dog will step onto - mattress top, couch cushion top, or bench seat - not just the frame.

Plan for traction on three surfaces: the ramp itself, the floor at the bottom, and the landing area at the top.

Load-test the finished ramp without your dog first.

Quick-start planning guide

A straight floor-supported ramp is usually the simplest first build. For many older dogs, a longer and gentler ramp is better than a shorter and steeper one.

Option	When it usually fits	Watch-outs
Straight ramp to bed	Bed access where you can leave the ramp in place or slide it partly under the frame.	High beds may need a very long run. Check the room footprint first.
Straight ramp to couch	Couch or loveseat access with a lower rise and predictable landing spot.	Soft cushions can shift the top contact point. Measure the actual cushion height.
Stairs instead of ramp	Confident dogs that still step well and have enough balance for short repeated lifts.	Often a poor fit for dogs with weak hind-end push, vision decline, or hesitation on descent.

Comfort slope guide

Slope ratio	What it means	Best use
1:5	For every 1 inch of rise, allow about 5 inches of ramp length.	Most forgiving starting point when space allows.
1:4	For every 1 inch of rise, allow about 4 inches of ramp length.	Common compromise between comfort and room footprint.
1:3	For every 1 inch of rise, allow about 3 inches of ramp length.	Short-space option only for more confident dogs.

If your dog slips, freezes, hops, swings wide at the top, or rushes down, treat that as feedback to lengthen the run, improve traction, or reconsider stairs.

Measurements worksheet

Take measurements twice. Write down the numbers you will actually build from, not estimates.

Dog name / project	_____	**Furniture target**	_____
Top surface height (rise)	_____ in	**Available room length**	_____ in
Available room width	_____ in	**Preferred slope ratio**	1:___
Target ramp length	_____ in	**Target ramp width**	_____ in
Top landing depth	_____ in	**Bottom floor clearance**	_____ in
Side-rail / lip height	_____ in	**Traction finish**	_____

Sizing notes

Dog size	Common width range	Rail / side lip
Toy / small	14-16 in	About 1.5-2 in
Medium	16-18 in	About 2-2.5 in
Large	18-22 in	About 2.5-3 in

Simple calculator

Ramp length = rise x slope ratio. Example: 24 in rise x 5 = about 120 in total ramp length.

Your rise	_____ in	**Chosen ratio**	1:____
Length calculation	_____ _____	**Final build length**	_____ in

Ramp or stairs? Decision sheet

Circle the option that better fits your dog right now. When the answers split evenly, the safer default is usually the gentler ramp.

Question	Leans ramp	Leans stairs
Dog hesitates with repeated step-ups or step-downs	Yes	No
Dog has weaker hind-end push or tires quickly	Yes	No
Dog is visually uncertain or rushes down steps	Yes	No
Room has enough length for a gentle run	Yes	No
Dog still steps cleanly and confidently	No	Yes
Furniture rise is modest and space is tight	No	Yes
Household can supervise training at first	Yes	Either
Need easiest descent and most forgiving pace	Yes	No

Final call

Best first option	Ramp / Stairs	**Why**	_____ _____
What could change the decision?	_____ _____	**Retest date**	_____

Good reasons to pause and ask a veterinarian or rehab professional first: pain on incline, knuckling, frequent stumbling, recent surgery, panic on descent, or a sudden drop in mobility.

Custom cut list and hardware planner

Use this page after you lock the rise, slope ratio, and width. Keep the design simple before adding extras.

Starter straight-ramp parts

Part	Qty	Cut size / spec	Notes
Deck panel	1	Length x finished width	Main walking surface.
Side rails / lips	2	Length x chosen rail height	Keep edges smooth and consistent.
Underside support strips	2-3	Match length or segmented support	Helps stiffen the ramp.
Top and bottom grip set	1 set	Furniture bumper + anti-slip feet	Protects contact points and reduces travel.
Traction layer	1	Length x width of walk area	Runner, rubber, marine carpet, or similar.

Blank cut-list worksheet

Part	Qty	Length	Width / thickness	Material	Done
_____	__	_____	_____	_____	[ ]
_____	__	_____	_____	_____	[ ]
_____	__	_____	_____	_____	[ ]
_____	__	_____	_____	_____	[ ]

Hardware checklist

[ ] Wood screws sized for your panel thickness

[ ] Wood glue if appropriate for your design

[ ] Sandpaper for all edges and contact points

[ ] Traction material and adhesive / fasteners

[ ] Non-slip feet or grippy bottom surface

[ ] Furniture-contact bumper or protective strip

Traction-surface guide

The right walking surface matters as much as the frame. Choose a finish that stays predictable under nails and paw pads.

Surface	Grip feel	Best for	Watch-outs
Low-pile carpet runner	Soft, familiar feel	Dogs that like fabric texture and need a quieter surface.	Can hold odor and may wear faster with heavy nail traffic.
Rubber mat / rubber runner	Strong grip	Dogs that slide easily and need extra stopping power.	Can be harder to clean if texture is deep.
Marine carpet	Firm, durable grip	Longer-term indoor setups.	Check edge finishing so nails do not catch.
Adhesive traction strips	Targeted grip	Extra help near the top landing or bottom start.	Not ideal as the only surface on a full-length ramp.
EVA / foam tread overlay	Cushioned feel	Lighter dogs that prefer softer contact.	Can compress or peel under repeated use.

Traction check

[ ] Bottom floor area is also non-slip

[ ] Top landing surface is stable and not slick

[ ] No raised edge catches nails

[ ] Adhesive is fully cured before first use

[ ] Surface can be cleaned without becoming slippery

[ ] Dog can place all four feet with confidence

Build-day and load-test checklist

Do not introduce the ramp to your dog until you complete the checks below.

Build-day checklist

[ ] All edges rounded or eased

[ ] Fasteners flush and not exposed to paws

[ ] Side rails / lips consistent from bottom to top

[ ] Top contact point sits flat against furniture

[ ] Bottom feet do not skate on the floor

[ ] Traction material fully attached across the walk path

[ ] Ramp does not rock under hand pressure

[ ] Room route is clear at both ends

Load test before dog use

[ ] Push down gradually along the full ramp length

[ ] Check for flex, twist, or sideways drift

[ ] Retighten any loose connections

[ ] Recheck the top and bottom contact points

[ ] Confirm the ramp stays planted during repeated pressure

[ ] Only begin training when the setup stays predictable

Training note

Start with calm, short assisted reps. Reward a slow and controlled pace. If your dog jumps off midway, backs off the ramp, or scrambles for traction, stop and adjust the setup before trying again.

Fit check and maintenance page

Use this page after a few days of real household use. The goal is not just whether the dog can use the ramp, but whether the dog uses it calmly and predictably.

Check area	What you saw	Adjustment needed?
Approach at the bottom	_____	Yes / No
Traction in the middle	_____	Yes / No
Turn at the top landing	_____	Yes / No
Descent pace	_____	Yes / No
Furniture contact point	_____	Yes / No
Noise / wobble over time	_____	Yes / No

Next change to test	_____	**Review date**	_____
Replacement traction date	_____	**Notes**	_____

Keep a simple approach: one change at a time. The most useful improvements are usually more length, better grip, a cleaner landing, or a more stable contact point.