

DIY Dog Stairs / Bed-Steps Plan Bundle

Planning sheets for safer bed and couch access for older, cautious, or mobility-limited dogs

Includes: stairs-or-ramp decision sheet, measurement worksheet, sample sizing profiles, custom cut-list planner, traction-surface guide, build-day checklist, and first-use fit check.

Best for: Dogs who can still step up safely but need shorter rises, grippy surfaces, and a stable approach.

Use this bundle when: You want a home DIY plan before buying materials or choosing dimensions.

Do not use as a substitute for: Veterinary advice, rehab planning, or commercial engineering review.

Switch to a ramp when: The dog drags paws, cannot lift evenly, panics on steps, or needs a gentler angle.

1. Stairs or ramp?

Use stairs when the dog can still make deliberate step-ups with control. Choose a ramp when you need a gentler, more continuous path.

Check this sign	Leans toward stairs	Leans toward ramp
Dog can place each paw cleanly	Yes	
Dog hesitates only at the first step	Yes	
Dog has short legs but fair balance	Yes	
Dog slips or scrambles on short rises		Yes
Dog drags paws or knuckles		Yes
Dog shows uneven hind-end strength		Yes
Furniture is high and approach distance is tight	Maybe	Maybe
Dog startles easily on narrow surfaces		Yes

Decision rule: if you feel torn, start with the gentler option. A stable ramp is usually easier to re-use across rooms than a steep stair unit.

Quick safety screen

- Stop and reassess if the dog refuses the setup after calm training and treats.
- Use stairs only if the unit will not tip, slide, or twist under real use.
- Plan a top landing that sits flush to the furniture edge or slightly below it - never above it.

2. Measurement worksheet

Measure the actual room, not the product photo. Record the finished floor, not the rug edge.

Room + dog measurements

A. Finished height to target surface	____ in
B. Available floor depth in front of furniture	____ in
C. Clear width available	____ in
D. Dog shoulder width at widest point	____ in
E. Dog body length nose-to-tail base (optional)	____ in
F. Existing slip points nearby	_____
G. Preferred side of approach	Left / Center / Right
H. Dog currently uses: bed / couch / chair / vehicle	_____

Sizing targets

Dimension	Good starting target	Why it matters
Stair rise	4.5 - 6 in	Shorter rises are easier for older or cautious dogs.
Tread depth	10 - 14 in	Allows a full paw plant instead of a toe-only step.
Usable width	Dog width + 6 - 10 in	Prevents crowding and shoulder bumping.
Top landing	Flush or 0 - 1 in below target	Keeps the final step predictable.

Formula shortcut: number of steps = ceiling(total height / target rise). Then actual rise = total height / number of steps.

3. Sample sizing profiles

Use these as starting profiles, then adjust to your own room and dog.

Profile	Target height	Steps	Rise each	Tread	Typical fit
A	18 in	3	6 in	12 in	Lower bed, low couch, window bench
B	21 in	4	5.25 in	12 in	Standard couch or average bed frame
C	24 in	4	6 in	13 in	Taller bed with enough floor depth
D	27 in	5	5.4 in	13 in	Tall bed where a shorter rise helps

Profile notes

- When floor depth is limited, do not keep adding steep steps. Move to a ramp or a lower furniture target instead.
- Very small dogs often prefer a little more tread depth than expected because they pause and re-balance between steps.
- For cautious dogs, the best early win is usually a wider, grippier unit - not a taller one.

4. Custom cut-list planner

This is a homeowner planning sheet. Confirm all dimensions after accounting for your actual material thickness.

Part	Qty	Size (in)	Notes	Done
Side panels / stringers	2	___ x ___	Mirror pair; mark left/right	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step treads	___	___ x ___	Depth should fit full paw plant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risers / front faces	___	___ x ___	Optional if using open style	<input type="checkbox"/>
Top landing panel	1	___ x ___	Meet furniture edge cleanly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rear brace	1	___ x ___	Prevents twist or sway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bottom anti-slip feet	4	n/a	Rubber pads or grippy base	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traction surface strips	___	___ x ___	Leave no slick gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>

Starter material list: plywood or furniture board, screws sized for your stock, wood glue if desired, anti-slip feet, traction surface, sandpaper, and edge-softening supplies.

5. Traction-surface guide

The top failure point is a smooth tread. Good traction often matters more than perfect woodworking.

Surface option	Best use	Watch-outs	Score
Low-pile carpet runner	Great all-purpose option	Can hold odor if accidents are frequent	High
Rubberized stair tread strips	Strong grip on each step	Edges must be bonded flat	High
Indoor/outdoor carpet tile	Durable and easy to replace	Check paw feel; some dogs dislike coarse fibers	Medium-high
Foam mats	Soft under paw	Can compress and shift if not fixed well	Medium
Bare sealed wood	Looks clean	Too slick for this use	Low

Placement notes

- Carry traction all the way to the top landing so the final transfer is not the slickest point.
- Round over sharp tread edges and sand splinter-prone corners before adding surface material.
- If accidents are likely, favor surfaces that can be replaced in strips instead of redoing the whole unit.

6. Build-day and first-use check

The build is not finished when the screws are in. It is finished when the dog can use the setup calmly, without slipping or surprise.

Build-day checklist

	Checklist item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm finished height, width, and floor depth before the first cut.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dry-fit pieces and test for twist or wobble before final fastening.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand edges and any paw-contact surfaces.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Install anti-slip feet and traction before indoor placement.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Push from multiple directions to check for tipping or racking.

First-use fit check

	Checklist item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce with treats and calm repetition - do not force the dog onto it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Watch whether each step allows a full, stable paw plant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check for hesitation at the top landing or the final step.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If the dog side-steps or widens stance, reassess width and traction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If refusal continues after calm tries, move to a gentler design or a ramp.

7. Final fit notes

Use this page after a few days of real use. The goal is to improve the setup, not to prove the first draft was correct.

What the dog did well	_____
Where hesitation showed up	_____
Any slip or paw-miss points	_____
Would a wider tread help?	Yes / No / Not sure
Would a lower rise help?	Yes / No / Not sure
Would a ramp be easier?	Yes / No / Not sure
Next adjustment to test	_____

Bonus idea for your storefront: pair this paid bundle with a free caregiver handoff sheet so buyers can keep home setup instructions in one place.

For home DIY planning only. Supervise first use. If the dog shows pain, panic, or worsening mobility, stop and consult a veterinarian.