

A guide to stairlifts

If using the stairs becomes difficult, there are several options. You could install stair rails, consider living downstairs if you have the bathroom facilities or even think about moving to a bungalow or a ground floor flat. Another option is installing a stair lift which is a powered device that takes you up and down stairs.



Things to consider

- Type of stairs - The stair lift needs to be appropriate to the type of stairs. If you have a curved stairway, then the lift needs to be able to go around the curve too. It either needs to go beyond top step to enable you to stand up far enough away from the top of the stairs or it needs to swivel so that the chair faces away from the stairs. There should be enough room for you to safely travel up the stairs without catching limbs as you go.
- Doorways – If there is a doorway near where the bottom of the track ends this needs to be considered. It may be that the track can be hinged to avoid blocking the doorway.
- Swivel seats – There are manual and a powered swivel seats choices depending on your ability to twist.
- Lift controls – There different types of controls available including joy sticks, buttons and switches. You need to consider which hand would be better able to use them.
- Weight – All stair lifts have a maximum weight limit which needs to be kept in mind when purchasing a lift.

- Other considerations – Health conditions such as epilepsy, dementia or those who suffer with dizzy spells may not be compatible with a stair lift or may require an individual risk assessment.
- Try before you buy – Depending on where you live there may be an Equipment Demonstration Centre nearby who will be able to offer you impartial advice to help you chose appropriately. Look on the Disabled Living Foundation’s web page to see if there is a centre near you. Alternatively, many stair lift companies will have a showroom where you can try different types of lifts before you buy.
- Second-hand / Reconditioned lifts - It is possible to buy a second-hand stair lift. If doing this we would advise that you purchase from a stair lift manufacturer, or an authorised company dealing in reconditioned stair lifts who will have checked that the stair lift meets current safety standards. They may also be able to provide a guarantee and possibly a warranty.
- Warranty – When considering purchasing a stair lift, please consider servicing and warranty options. Consider an extended warranty and check what the warranty covers. Also consider the companies out of hour’s service offer.
- Long term needs – Installing a stair lift can be a costly adaptation (a straight stair lift costs on average around £3371, curved stair lifts can cost £4728 and second hand stair lifts around £1,500 (Which?, 2023)). It needs to meet your needs now and in the future and is why we suggest looking at all the above considerations. When choosing a contractor it is recommended that you get quotes from at least two companies. If you have a condition that is likely to deteriorate at a significant rate then please contact an Occupational Therapist to discuss whether a stair lift is the right option for you to safely use now and in the foreseeable future.

More Information

Are you entitled to VAT relief? Find out more at: www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vat-relief

Please note this leaflet is a guide and not an exhaustive list of recommendations which will depend on your unique circumstances. If you require an Occupational Therapy assessment please contact Lincolnshire County Council’s Customer Service Centre on 01522 782155.

The Council is committed to protecting your privacy and ensuring all personal information is kept confidential and safe. For more details see our general and service specific privacy notices at: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/privacy>