

# Planning A New (or Remodeled) Stairway



st - 1

A complete guide to understanding the choices you have for new or remodeled stair in your home.

By Mike Summy

## Chapter 1

### Different Types of Stairs

You've probably seen many beautiful and breath-taking stairs in your time, but now it is your turn to plan one for YOUR new house. The information below will make your choice a little easier.

#### Run Info:

In most municipalities or other governed places to live, the run of any stair will normally be dictated to you. It is up to you to learn this and other codes as they relate to stairs.

**Normal runs for Residential stairs are 10" "clear of the tread above". Added to this number is the overhang or "nosing" which is very typically an additional 1-1/4". These two added together, will give you an 11-1/4" deep tread to walk on each step going up or down. This is a comfortable size on which to walk plus a housed open stair allows you to fully step on the tread all the way including hanging over the back of each tread.**

## Chapter 2

### Box Stairs

**A Box Stair is the simplest of all stairs. It is simply an inexpensive "ramp" with treads and risers that goes between two walls at about 40 degrees incline. Generally, the typical residential box stair is 13 to 16 risers tall.**

**The most common run code is 10" with a 11-1/4" deep tread. Run is the depth of the tread less the overhang or nosing above each tread. The nosing is usually 1-1/4" for the best appearance. Frequently, all of the treads and risers will be covered with carpet, which is why this stair is also called a "Carpet Grade" stair.**

**Riser code 7-1/4" or less. So, if your overall rise from the first floor to the**

**second floor is 107-1/4", then each individual rise should be 7-1/8" or a 15 rise stair.**

## **Chapter 3**

### **Open 1 Side Stairs**

Open 1 Side Stairs are viewed to be more formal and expensive type of stair. These stairs still accomplish the basics of climbing up or down a floor, but they look better. An Open 1 Side Stair is one that has balusters mounted directly into each tread all the way up. Typically you will find three balusters on each tread since they must be no farther apart than 4". In other words, if you place a 4" diameter ball between any two balusters on your stair or for that matter, your level rails too, it must be compacted at least slightly or the balusters are illegal and won't meet most local codes in the USA because they are too far apart.

A normal Open Stair will

## **Chapter 4**

### **Open Both Sides Stairs**

Open Both Sides Stair is the same thing as an Open 1 Side Stair, but with both sides of the stair having a balustrade system. This type of stair is found almost exclusively in the largest of homes. Sometimes these homes will even two stairs

## **Chapter 5**

### **Partial Open 1 or Both Side Stairs**

For those that may have a larger budget, an open stair may be in line. An Open Stair is one that has nice finished mitre returns on the end of the open treads for a classier look. Open stairs frequently are made up of red oak treads,

cottonwood risers and stringers for paint. This allows for a contrasted look with stained treads for a clean look. Types of Open stairs include all oak, where all components are stained and nothing is painted. Open stairs can be all oak or a combination of painted and stained woods.



Open stairs can be all oak or a combination of painted and stained woods.

Painted risers and stringers combined with oak treads is a real plus while still staying on a budget.



Partial Open 1 or Both Side Stairs are

## Chapter 6

### Housed Open Stairs

Housed Open Stairs are a totally different breed of stairs. Housed Open Stairs are most commonly found in the vestibules or entry areas of apartment houses. These stairs must be built very strong because countless hundreds of people will be walking on them for years and years and they must hold up extra heavy loads when tenants are moving in or out and carrying heavy loads or even appliances.

Typically, Housed Open Stairs will have

## Chapter 7

### Starting Steps

Starting Steps are "the icing on the cake". Simply put, Starting Steps are rounded (or radiused) end treads. This rounded look is necessary to accommodate the addition of Volute or Turnout Fittings which add considerable appeal to any stairway. These steps can be added to Box Stairs as well as Open Stairs and Partial Open Stairs. One must take into account that Starting Steps must stick out approximately 12" wider than the stair. So, sometimes it is not possible to use these if that extra width would stick out into a hallway located next to the stair. Normally, Starting Steps are made out of Red Oak to match the treads used on many stairs.



## Chapter 8

### Winders

Winders are sections of a stair that enable the stair to change direction. Winders have 2 or 3 "kite-like" treads generally to accomplish a 90 degree turn. Winders can be incorporated in all types of stairs wherever there is not enough room to make the stair straight up or straight down. Some consider Winders not as safe to walk on as regular stairs, however, most of the time, if used, it's because the stair had to turn to fit into the house.

