

Building Stairways with Landings


Designing and building a stairway with a landing can be one of the most challenging elements of a deck project. Precision is crucial, since building codes have very exact standards for stairway construction. To ensure that the steps for both the top and bottom staircases have the same vertical rise and tread depth, the landing must be set at the right position and height.

Even for professional builders, designing a stairway layout is a process of trial and revision. Begin by creating a preliminary layout that fits your situation, but as you plan and diagram the project, be prepared to revise the layout to satisfy code requirements and the demands of your building site. Measure your site carefully, and work out all the details on paper before you begin any work. Accuracy and meticulous planning will help ensure that your steps are level and uniform in size.

Remember that any stairway with more than three steps requires a railing (pages 196 to 197).

Building a stairway with a landing is a six-stage project:

- Creating a preliminary layout (page 154)
- Creating a final layout (page 155)
- Building a stairway landing (pages 155 to 156)
- Laying out stringers (page 157)
- Building the lower staircase (page 158)
- Building the upper staircase (page 159)



A landing functions essentially as a large step that interrupts a tall stairway. For the builder, the landing provides a convenient spot from which to change the direction of the stairway. For the homeowner, the landing provides a spot to catch your breath momentarily while climbing.