

YOUR STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO KIT STAIRCASES

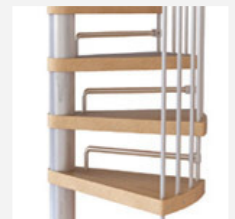
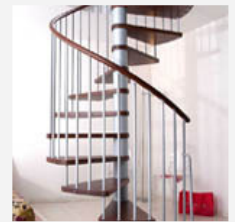
At last - a real choice

Not so long ago, your only options for staircases were either simple timber flights from your local Builders Merchant or using the expertise of a joinery workshop for a made to measure staircase. Things have moved on rapidly with the arrival of the "kit" staircase to the UK – bringing a range of styles, sizes and colours, packed in component form and delivered direct to site for easy installation. These kits usually offer three formats – [spirals](#), [modular \(straight, quarter turn or half turn\)](#), and [alternate tread "spacesaver" stairs](#). So now you have a real choice, whether you want a traditional or contemporary look for a main or secondary staircase.

Stay on the right side of your Building Control Department

But we all know about the problems of keeping within the Building Regs and Part K seems to have more than its fair share of "grey" areas for staircase designs. This can be a particularly tricky area when the kit staircases are imported from other EU countries where the regulations seem slightly more relaxed. So ask your supplier, who should be the expert on both kit staircases and the UK regs, to guide you through your options to make sure that you stay on the right side of your Building Control Department *and* your customer. In general terms, a kit spiral stair can be used to access a single room, as in a loft conversion, typically with a diameter of 1400mm, 1500mm or 1600mm, but the kit spirals are not available in large enough diameters to use as a main staircase, where the regs demand a much larger spiral, usually between 1800-2100mm. Staircases like the [Klan Spiral Staircase](#) with its vertical steel spindles would be a perfect choice for a spiral staircase to a loft conversion, especially if you select the 1500mm diameter. And don't forget to consider the matching balustrading for around the stairwell, which you can fit on a circular or square/rectangular opening.

You'll have noticed that the vast majority of staircases on the market now have open treads which emphasise the clean, simple lines of the designs. However, there is a specific UK building regulation which states that there should be no gaps on the staircase, either between the baluster spindles or between the open treads, which is more than 100mm or 4". This is to prevent children getting stuck. However, there is a simple solution to this on the kit and bespoke staircases which have open treads and this is what's called a Riserbar Kit. This is a metal or timber bar or strip which is installed between each tread to effectively cut the gap down, as shown on the left. You would have to check that the balustrade spindles on the staircase itself comply with this 100mm gap rule, though, if you need to fully comply with this aspect of the [Building Regulations](#). Again, the staircase supplier should have all the information for you.



Practical and versatile options

The modular stairs are extremely versatile and can be used as secondary or main staircases offering a wide range of configurations from each kit package. The Stilo and the Vector are both modular staircases which are totally adjustable. You can install them in an L or a U shape with a choice of 152 different configurations, adjust the tread rise and the tread going, include riserbars or additional balustrading, and even have a choice of staircase widths. They offer really practical and versatile options and this design of staircase is ideal for a refurbishment or could be used for a new build project. You'll find more information on [the pages featuring the modular staircase ranges](#) from the most informative of the staircase kit suppliers in the UK.

Where space is at a premium

The alternate tread "spacesaver" should only be used to access a single room, for example in a loft conversion – and even then, some Building Control Officers have a strong dislike for them! But they are covered in the UK Building Regulations Part K and, if you only have enough room for a spacesaver then you are able to choose a well designed and manufactured staircase, such as the Venus Spacesaver. Using a spacesaver with the paddle shaped treads will take little over half the space of a standard staircase and, where space is at a premium, they are very useful.



Source of information and advice

Don't forget that the imported kit stairs usually offer a maximum tread rise which is much higher than our UK regs allow – so ask your supplier to check how your chosen stair kit will work for your floor to floor height – don't just look at the sizes printed on the manufacturer's brochure or you could end up with big problems getting the project signed off. It's never easy finding the time to source materials but try to look for a knowledgeable and enthusiastic specialist staircase supplier who will be able to provide you with technical support - and use them as a source of information and advice. Try www.StaircaseKits.co.uk for good products and plenty of advice. This will help to cut down the amount of time you would have to spend on checking the regs and the specifications and will also build up your knowledge so that you can make the right decisions

Not the time to take short cuts

When it comes to installation, these kit stairs really come into their own. Most of them are designed for simple install with clear instructions and are delivered complete with a video where you can see the various stages of the installation process and get a good understanding of the general approach to take. This is not the time to take short cuts – the instructions should be clear and straightforward and will be the quickest and best way to install your staircase. One person installing the spiral staircases and "spacesavers" usually takes between 1 – 1 ½ days. The modular staircase can take about 1 ½ - 2 days to complete.



Tap into this source of expertise

And don't forget to include the riserbars with the staircase installation; they fit between the treads to make sure that the gap between the treads is less than 100mm (to stop children under 5 getting stuck and injuring themselves). Again, your choice of supplier can make a difference to you here. Before you place your order, ask your supplier for advice on your project and judge them on their ability to offer clear and knowledgeable help. Don't worry that you're not an expert – they should be, and they should be very happy to advise and guide you. You may need to tap into this source of expertise before or during the installation and you should be comfortable that you will get the right response from them.

Sensational feature for your project

But there may be projects which demand staircases beyond the package styles and sizes. There are design companies who specialise in one-off staircase of extremely high quality and with a matching price tag. However, there are also many pre-designed staircases available which offer a really wide choice of styles and materials. These are a more cost-effective way to bring superb quality and styling to your project and still create a unique and sensational feature for your project. Talk to your specialist staircase supplier and let them inspire you!

