



Accessible Home Modifications

7 Items to Consider Before Buying a Stairlift

At UDS, we offer a wide range of products tailored to meet the accessibility needs of each of our customers. One of our most popular accessibility solutions is a stairlift. We recommend asking seven questions before deciding if a stair lift is right for you or your loved one.

1. Is it physically safe to ride the lift?

Some medication conditions can make riding a stairlift unsafe, particularly when an individual loses strength in core muscles and can no longer sit upright. Examples may include conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, ALS or a spinal cord injury. The question to ask is: Can the rider sit unaided in a kitchen chair with no risk of falling off? If the answer is “no” or even “I think so,” then you may need to consider another option.

2. Cognitive Ability to Ride

Riding a chair up a staircase is typically a new experience. For people with dementia or those who have cognitive disorders, the idea of sitting in a moving chair may be scary or even downright terrifying. If you think the rider may get confused or frightened and try to get off the lift while it is moving, then you may need to consider another option.

3. Required Weight Capacity

Riders exceeding a lift’s weight capacity are one of the most common sources of breakdowns with lifts. The motors on lifts are sized to meet a certain capacity and exceeding that capacity over time will damage the motor and shorten the life of the unit. Sure, you may save a few dollars in the immediate future by choosing a lower capacity unit, but in the long run, you will spend more. We recommend selecting a unit with a capacity 120% times that of the rider. This allows room for fluctuating weight over time.

4. Curved vs. Straight

Custom Curved lifts are available to match any staircase, with as many curves and landing points as you want. But they may be considerably more expensive than other options. If your budget is limited, curved units may be out of reach. If the rider can navigate a step or two, consider installing two straight lifts on steps with a landing. On steps where the bottom set of steps is only a step or two, keeping those two steps may be good physical therapy for you, and will save a great deal of money.

5. Width of Stairs

This is a common concern. Most stairlift manufacturers require a 32" minimum stair width. The lift itself can go up and down much narrower stairs, but the rider may not. Consider how far out the rider's knees will extend because if they will hit the wall, serious injury may occur. If Mom is only 5' 0", she may well be able to ride a lift on a narrower stairway, but, if Dad is 6'2", even a width of 32" may not be enough. Have the rider sit in a kitchen chair and measure from the back of the chair to their knees, then add 7" for the lift rail. This is the minimum stair width you need to ride safely. And, always measure your stairs at the narrowest point; if you are going to get hurt, that is where the injury will happen.

6. Codes and Electrical

Be aware of your State's Building Codes and Permit requirements. Many states now require enclosed railings on steps, not just a single banister railing without balusters or sides, as was common years ago. Your contractor may be required to bring your steps into code compliance and you might also need a building permit as part of doing so. Other typical issues are ungrounded outlets, which can damage your unit, or outlets that require an extension cord to reach. Either of these situations will typically void your manufacturer's warranty and should be avoided, if possible. You may save money upfront by not addressing them, but in the long run, you may have higher repair costs.

7. Are There Other Options?

For many individuals, stairlifts are a great accessibility solution that can allow the full enjoyment of a home. However, they may not be a good solution for everyone. Other options to consider include Vertical Platform Lifts [By Bruno](#) or Inclined Platform Lifts [by Harmar](#). These options will transport both you, and your wheelchair, which may be necessary for some of our customers.

At UDS, our experts are committed to helping you find the best accessibility solutions for you and your home, not just to making a sale. Let us help you today by contacting us at **888-428-0240** or homemodifications@udservices.org.

Need a lift?

Let us help you remain independent in your home.

American-made lifts installed and serviced by a local professional.



uds Accessible Home Modifications

888-428-0240 • udservices.org

uds Accessible Home Modifications

888-428-0240
Local and dependable.

- We install indoor and outdoor, straight and curved model stair lifts and vertical platform lifts from Bruno and Handicare
- Manufacturer's warranty on parts and 1-year labor warranty
- We service all lifts we install and all Bruno lifts
- We install lifts in Lancaster, Chester, York, Dauphin, Lebanon and Berks Counties

\$100 off Show this coupon to receive \$100 off **Straight Stair Lift**

\$200 off Show this coupon to receive \$200 off **Curved Stair Lift**

Hurry Offers End Soon

Call us to schedule a FREE In-Home Evaluation
888-428-0240



We also specialize in accessible showers and tubs.

2270 Erin Court
Lancaster, PA 17601