

Glossary

As with any industry the staircase and balustrade industry has its own technical terms for items. The glossary below will help you decode these words.

Baluster - Balusters generally refer to square design spindles. Available in either 32 or 41mm square to suit your preference

Baserail - The baserail is fitted to the string or the landing to form a base to locate the lower end of the spindles. Available in either 32 or 41mm groove sizes to allow for different spindle dimensions.

Closed string - The more common type of staircase construction in the UK. With this staircase the string is a solid rectangular shape and the treads are fitted into recesses machined into the side.

Cut String - On this type of flight the string is cut to allow the treads to protrude through to the side of the flight. This is a more expensive, but visually more pleasing method of construction and is often seen in larger homes.

Handrail - Available in 32 or 41mm groove sizes to suit different spindle or baluster sizes. Handrails are also available in various lengths to suit your application.

Handrail Fittings - Shaped pieces of handrail that change the direction of the rail, either horizontally for a landing turn or vertically to change the pitch of the rail. The continuous handrail system has a wide range of fittings to allow the rail to run continuously over the top of specially designed newel posts.

Fillet - small pieces of timber that sit within the handrail and baserail grooves to space and retain the spindles. These are packaged along with the rails.

Flight - Another term for a staircase.

Newel Base - The lower part of a newel assembly that attaches the newel to the staircase string or the landing joists.

Newel Cap - A decorative finial that finishes the top of a newel post.

Newel Post - The structural vertical posts on a balustrade, usually found at the top and bottom of a flight, and often on direction changes on a landing.

Over the Post - Also called a continuous handrail system, this type of balustrade uses a handrail that flows continuously over the top of specially designed newel posts. Small shaped pieces of handrail are used to create turns and changes in the pitch of the staircase.

Pitch - The angle at which a staircase rises. The maximum allowable pitch is 42 degrees.

Pitch line - This is an imaginary line that connects the nosings of the treads. This line is important as the height of the balustrade is set at a minimum level above this line. In the UK this is 900mm for domestic stairs and 1100mm for public stairs.

Post to Post - Also called a straight handrail system, this type of balustrade uses straight runs of handrail connected between the heads of newels. See also Over the Post systems

Spindle - A turned version of a baluster. Available in either 32 or 41mm square to suit your preference.

String - Sometimes also referred to as a stringer, this is the large flat piece of timber that makes up the sides of a staircase. On a normal closed string flight the treads are fitted into recesses machined into the string. See also cut string and closed string

Winder Flight - A staircase that turns using triangular shaped treads. Winders can be added together to turn through more than 90 degrees.

Winder Kite - A term that describes one of the triangular treads that is part of a winder flight.