



- Works as a handrail
- Works round corners
- Safety bar folds away
- Mechanism is hidden
- No regular maintenance
- Easy to use
- Uses no electricity
- Reduces trips and falls
- Keeps users active
- Increases independence
- Offers better access

The Austin Stair Aid

The largest proportion of accidents are falls from stairs or steps with over 60% of deaths resulting from accidents on stairs (Source ROSPA).

On being allowed home from hospital after suffering a stroke Bill Austin's wife Betty wanted to sleep upstairs in her own bed, this created a problem for Bill as Betty would not allow the installation of a stair-lift and she was adamant that she would get upstairs by herself. To solve this, Bill created a new way of offering support to anyone whilst climbing stairs. This has been developed into the Austin Stair Aid and it's not just stairs it works with.

Phil Richards the Chief Executive of Twin Valley Homes saw the safety rail when visiting Bill and he quickly realised the benefits it offered to end users, the NHS and other organisations. He introduced Bill to The Blackburn Innovation & Technology Service who brought in a local company, Polymet Ltd. The development process that followed has involved many organisations and individuals including Lancaster University, Physiotherapists, Social Services and Occupational Therapists.

The Licensing and patent process would have been difficult without the assistance of The Blackburn Innovation & Technology Service which since 2007 has become the Eureka Programme of No Limits. There have been many highs and lows in the development process but the final product has now been fully tested and is market ready. Polymet have such faith in the product that they have founded a new company Mapleleaf to take it to market.

The patent has been applied for and CE marking is being progressed, Bill hopes that the Austin Stair Aid he designed to help his wife Betty will now help reduce falls on stairs involving the frail and elderly.

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