

Deborah Zelten's Do-It-Yourself Dog Ramp

Last Christmas I decided to get a present for my friend's aging Lab/Newfie mix (weighing in at about 105 pounds) who is starting to have problems getting into and out of her SUV – a dog ramp. I researched them and found they were quite expensive, costing \$200 - \$225 for “large” dogs. When I looked at them I thought: “I could build that for a lot less money!” Since I am quite handy, I designed one myself, basing my plans on those I saw in various magazines and catalogs. After about \$25 worth of material and a couple of hours of “building” – *voila!* a handy, dandy dog ramp for one-tenth the cost of a “commercial” one! The plans follow.

This makes a dog ramp that measures approximately 5 feet in length by 16 inches wide. (Commercial dog ramps are usually 4 feet 8 inches [56 inches] long by either 12, 14 or 16 inches wide.) It uses rubberized non-skid ribbed carpet and has “sides” to keep unsteady dog feet from slipping sideways. I bought all my materials at Home Depot. The ramp has optional features such as a ramp ledge and the ramp can be made to fold in half for easier storage.

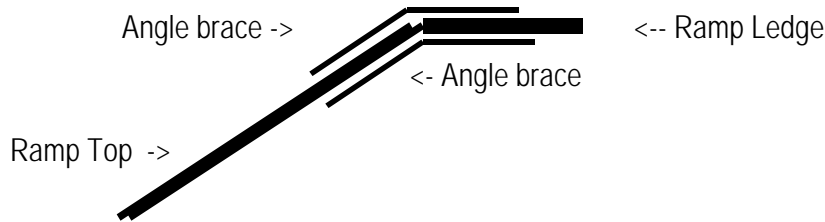
I have written very detailed plans to help those who are not used to building things. Obviously, more experienced people can just skim them.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES:

- **One 5-foot section (or two 2 ½-foot sections for a folding ramp) of 16- inch wide lumber or “shelving” board.** (I used a 16-inch wide, ¾ inch thick melamine-coated shelving board made of particle board. This is heavier in weight than normal pine lumber boards such as a 1x16, but I wanted sturdiness since the ramp may be used by a St. Bernard.) I had to buy an eight foot length of this shelving board [about \$13] and had the lumber company cut a 5 foot section for me. This wood is for the actual “ramp.”
- **Two 5-foot sections of 3- or 4-inch wide base-board moulding (or four 2 ½-foot sections for the folding ramp).** Moulding is usually sold by the foot (about 40 to 80 cents a foot depending on the type). I paid 40 cents a foot for some 3 ½ inch wide, already-painted moulding that I had the lumber company cut for me. This moulding makes the “side rails.”
- **Ten #6 1¼-inch (drywall) screws** – five for each side. (Use twelve screws for the folding ramp) to attach the side rails to the ramp. (A box of 100 screws is a about \$5.)
- **One 6-foot section of carpet runner approximately 15 inches wide.** I bought a 15-inch section of a non-skid, ribbed indoor/outdoor carpet. This carpet looked like giant “wide wale corduroy” and was on a huge roll that was 6 feet wide. It was sold by the linear foot and cost \$4 per linear foot or \$5 for a 15 inch strip.) Another material you could buy by the linear foot is the rubberized matting that is put under throw rugs to keep them from slipping on hardwood or tile floors. It looks like rubber-coated hardware cloth. A couple layers would make a good non-slip surface. Another possibility is ordinary bathtub rubber non-slip mats – a couple of them would also work.
- **Approximately twenty ½-inch flathead screws (or nails)** for attaching the carpeting (or rubber mats) to the ramp to provide non-slip footing. **OR** use a heavy duty staple gun and staples instead of the screws.

OPTIONAL Supplies for the RAMP LEDGE:

- **One 6-inch section of the same lumber or shelving board as the ramp base** – again, have the lumber company cut this section for you from the original “board.” This will become the ramp ledge.



Step 2A. The angle braces will be used to attach the ledge to the ramp. Attach two of the angle braces to the bottom side of the ramp "top" with the ½-inch screws so that the "bend" of the angle is even with the end of the ramp top.

Step 2B. Using the ½-inch screws, attach the 6-inch piece of lumber (the ramp ledge) to the top of the angle braces you just attached to the ramp in Step 2A, making sure that the edge of the ramp top and the ramp ledge are flush up against one another. (Note that for a totally flat fit it will be necessary to cut the butting end of this piece at the appropriate angle; however, this is not really necessary.)

Step 2C. Using the ½-inch screws, attach the remaining two angle braces to the top of the ramp and the top of the ramp ledge. (The bend of the angle braces will cover up the point where the ramp top and ramp ledge meet.)

STEP 3. Carpeting/Non-skid Matting.

Screw (using ½-inch flathead screws) or use a staple gun to attach the carpet or non-skid matting to the ramp. Wrap the extra carpet/matting length a couple inches over each end of the ramp (extend it onto the ramp ledge if you made the ramp ledge) and attach it securely to the bottom of the ramp. (This helps keep the ramp from slipping on the ground as your dog walks up the ramp into your vehicle.) NOTE: If you are making a folding ramp, only wrap the carpet over the ramp top (or ramp ledge) and ramp bottom – do not wrap it over the edges where the hinges will be.

STEP 4. Folding Ramp.

This step is optional – do it only if you want to make a "folding" ramp. This allows the ramp to fit more easily into your vehicle. The ramp will fold so that the bottom side (i.e., the side **without** the carpeting) folds onto itself.

Step 4A. Take your two ramp halves and attach them with two heavy duty hinges evenly-spaced and put on the **bottom** sides of the two ramp sections so that the ramp will fold together with the two bottom sides touching. **Make sure the hinges are placed correctly!**

Step 4B. For added support and less flexibility at the joint of the two ramp sections, attach the two heavy duty barrel (slide) bolts to the bottom **outside** of the ramp at the break in the ramp. These will be kept open when the ramp is folded, closed only when used for large dogs. Make sure they are placed so that each section of the bolt is on **either side of the opening**. Also, they should be attached so that one row of screws is connected through the moulding **into the actual bed of the ramp**. Use longer screws for this row.

AND THAT'S IT! You are now the proud owner of a dog ramp that you made yourself! You can paint or stain the ramp to preserve the wood if you wish. Also, the folded ramp should fit quite nicely into an old pillowcase, allowing you to keep it clean and present a nice, finished product.