



# YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO NATURAL FLOORCOVERINGS

Creative Floorcoverings & Rugs by  
**CRUCIAL TRADING**

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# Your essential guide to natural floorcoverings

Natural floorcoverings made from plant fibres such as wool, coir, jute, sisal, seagrass, paper and bamboo provide the perfect base for creating the most beautiful and inviting rooms. Each of these natural and sustainable materials has its own unique properties, which this guide sets out to explain.

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# Important information about our floorcoverings

Investing a little time in choosing the perfect natural floorcovering for your home means your natural floorcovering will live with you for a long time. Therefore, Crucial Trading advises retailers and their customers to read through all of the information in this guide prior to purchasing and installing the chosen product.



## Jute

Jute is a bast fibre which comes from the inner bark of plants of the genus *Cochorus*. The plant is a herbaceous annual which flourishes in hot damp regions of Asia. The main producing countries are Bangladesh and India. The plant grows to a height of over 3m with a stalk diameter of 3cm.

After harvesting, usually by cutting with a hand sickle, the stalks are retted by being steeped in a sluggish moving stream of water until the fibre can easily be removed from the stalk. In recent years a considerable amount of research has been carried out on mechanical techniques in retting tanks.

The removed strands of fibre, up to 2m long, are washed and dried in the sun and then baled and sent to the spinning mills where they are spun into yarns for use in a variety of products including floorcoverings. Jute has a silky lustre and varies in colour in a wide range of natural shades.

To ensure longevity and the best performance from your natural floorcovering and for our full support, you need to:

- Choose the right product for your particular needs. All natural plant fibre floorcoverings should be used with caution in high-moisture areas such as the kitchen and bathroom. Jute is best confined to low-traffic areas where it will wear well
- Ensure your chosen product is fitted by a specialist, using the correct installation methods and products
- Seaming: If seams are required it is advisable that they are discussed prior to purchasing. Due to the varied nature of our products some of our products will join more easily and neatly than others and what is an acceptable join appearance is subjective and will vary from customer to customer

- Specify INTEC stain inhibition treatment, which we'll take care of before your floorcovering is delivered (with jute products this comes as standard at no extra cost). INTEC works by coating every fibre in a polymer shield, which reduces the impact of spills and watermarks
- Tackle any spills as quickly as possible, using our Crucial Trading Care and Cleaning Kit
- Use suction-only vacuum cleaners and avoid cleaners with beater bars which may cause damage to the fibres

Because our products are made from natural materials there will always be slight variations in the yarn, weave and colour which are all part of the aesthetic charm of a natural floor. During its lifetime, your floorcovering will naturally lighten in colour.

If you look after your Crucial Trading product in the right way, you will have a floorcovering that is truly special with excellent performance.

### Dyeing

Bright and relatively fast shades can be obtained using Azoic or Vat dyes.

However, it is advisable to avoid putting jute floorcoverings in areas of bright sunlight e.g. in front of patio windows.

### The floorcovering

Crucial Trading offers a selection of jute floorcoverings including fineweave herringbone and boucle in natural shades.

As stated above, it should be noted that jute can be affected by bright sunlight.

As with all natural fibres there will be product inconsistencies, however Crucial Trading's policy is to minimise these by regular product inspection for quality.

### End-use

Floorcoverings made with jute are not as hard-wearing as some of the other natural plant fibres but it has a softer handle which can be more pleasing to some tastes. When

treated with respect jute floorcoverings with their natural colour can be used to great effect in the home. It is advisable to avoid laying jute products in areas of heavy wear such as hallways, busy living rooms and stairs.

### Moisture

Jute is an unusually hygroscopic fibre and can absorb water under humid conditions so it is advisable to avoid areas of high moisture. Floorcoverings made with jute can shrink and care must therefore be taken when installing the product.

### Conditioning

Jute floorcoverings should be conditioned in the area in which they are to be laid for at least 48 hours. It is recommended that the floorcovering is unrolled, laid out and cut to shape but oversize by about 60mm to allow for any change in dimensions during the conditioning period.

### Maintenance and installation

See pages 16 to 22.

# Coir

Coir (*Cocos nucifera*) fibre is obtained from the husk of the nut which is the fruit of the coconut plant. The fibre is removed from the husk either by hand or mechanical processes. In the former, the coconut husks are softened in water and then pounded with stones to remove the woody portions, after which the fibres are hackled with a steel comb and dried. In the mechanical system, the husks are quartered and placed in large water tanks to soften the husks. They are then passed through a breaker which crushes them before passing them into the next machine, the drum, where the woody part is torn out by a series of spikes leaving the long coarse fibres.

The fibres are then washed, cleaned and dried and hackled before being spun into a yarn suitable for use in a variety of products including floorcoverings.

## Dyeing

It is not usual to dye coir fibre although it can be bleached to produce a creamy yellow shade.

## The floorcovering

All coir products in the Crucial Trading range are produced by an authentic natural route. The hand-processed fibre, which is considered to be superior in quality to mechanical processed fibre, is spun into yarn and then woven on hand operated looms.

Crucial Trading's coir range features basic hand woven designs in natural coconut colour, bleached cream colour and a combination of the two.

As with all natural fibres there will be product inconsistencies, however Crucial Trading's policy is to minimise these by regular product inspection for quality.

## End-use

Floorcoverings made with coir are as hard wearing as sisal and can be used in a variety of both domestic and light contract areas.

## Sunlight

It should be noted that bleached Coir can revert to its natural colour when exposed to bright sunlight.

## Moisture

Coir is a hygroscopic fibre and can absorb water under humid conditions so it is advisable to avoid areas of high moisture.

Coir reacts to moisture by expanding which can lead to the floorcovering wrinkling and buckling. When discharging moisture coir shrinks.

## Conditioning

Coir floorcoverings should be conditioned in the area in which they are to be laid for at least 48 hours. It is recommended that the floorcovering is unrolled, laid out and cut to shape but oversize by about 60mm to allow for any change in dimensions during the conditioning period.

## Maintenance and installation

See pages 16 to 22.



# Sisal

Sisal is a leaf fibre obtained from the plant *Agave Sisalana* of which there are many varieties. The plant is grown in a number of countries including East Africa, Brazil and China.

The fibres are removed from the leaf by a process of decortication after which they are washed, dried and graded before being spun into a yarn suitable for use in a variety of end-uses, including floorcoverings.

## Dyeing

Sisal can be dyed to produce a wide range of attractive shades with generally good light fastness. However, in direct sunlight deeper shades may be affected.

## The floorcovering

Crucial Trading offers a wide range of sisal products in different qualities, styles and weaves including herringbone, twill, plaid and boucle. The different ranges reflect the differences in the quality of the fibre, the weave and consequently the price.

As with all natural fibres there will be product inconsistencies, however, Crucial Trading's policy is to minimise these by regular product inspection for quality.

## End-use

Floorcoverings made with sisal are hard-wearing and can be used in a wide range of locations including domestic and some contract areas. Special care and attention must be taken when installing sisal floorcoverings where high moisture levels are likely e.g. bathrooms and kitchens.

In most instances sisal natural floorcoverings will give excellent performance. However, because of the natural properties of sisal, Crucial Trading cannot guarantee that shrinkage will not occur.

## Moisture

Sisal absorbs moisture readily and floorcoverings made with sisal can shrink. Care must therefore be taken when installing the product.

## Conditioning

Sisal floorcoverings should be conditioned in the area in which they are to be laid for at least 48 hours. It is recommended that the floorcovering is unrolled, laid out and cut to shape but oversize by about 60mm to allow for any change in dimensions during the conditioning period.

## Maintenance and installation

See pages 16 to 22.





# Paper

Paper yarns were first produced from finished paper claimed Emil Claviez, who in 1885-97 took out patents for producing yarn from paper strips and for a spindle for twisting them.

The development of paper yarns has continued and as far back as World War II paper yarns have been used for a variety of textile uses including carpets. Practically all paper yarns are made from kraft (meaning strong) paper.

## Dyeing

Paper can be dyed to a wide range of shades.

## The floorcovering

Paper from Crucial Trading is a unique range of floorcoverings woven from 100% twisted paper yarn.

## End-use

Crucial Trading's collection of paper floorcoverings is very durable and can be used in most domestic locations.

## Moisture

Paper yarns are specially treated during the manufacturing process to minimise the absorption of moisture. Paper yarns are less sensitive to moisture than other natural fibres.

## Conditioning

As with all floorcoverings the paper collection should be conditioned in the area in which they are to be laid for at least 48 hours. It is recommended that the floorcovering is unrolled, laid out and cut to shape but oversize by about 60mm to allow for any change in dimensions during the conditioning period.

## Maintenance and installation

See pages 16 to 22.



# Bamboo

Weight-for-weight bamboo is stronger than steel and is one of the toughest and fastest growing plants on the planet. Technically, bamboo is a grass, but some varieties, such as the Giant Timber Bamboo, can grow as high as 30m. With thousands of uses around the world, including food, paper, construction material and medicines, bamboo truly is an amazing plant. In fact, ancient Chinese people used to say that a life spent mastering bamboo is a good life!

## Staining

Bamboo can be stained to give a variety of different shade options. Crucial Trading offers a selection of these to give a natural or contemporary feel to any home.

## The floorcovering

Through a process of sewing together narrow strips of bamboo and applying a natural felt backing, Crucial Trading is proud to offer a collection of bamboo rugs. With our wide selection of borders available, these rugs can be tailor-made to complement any contemporary or traditional home.

Crucial Trading bamboo is also finished with a matt lacquer to further enhance its moisture tolerance whilst providing a very hard-wearing surface seal. As with all natural products there will be product inconsistencies, however, Crucial Trading's policy is to minimise these through regular product inspections.

## End-use

Available as rugs, these durable products can be used in any domestic location, even in areas of higher humidity (such as kitchens and bathrooms), where other natural products and even standard wooden flooring would not be suitable.

Bamboo rugs make a stunning addition to any household.

# Wool

Wool, a fibre from animal origins, has been used for making carpets as far back as 3000BC.

The many advantages of wool for use in floorcoverings are the direct result of its naturalness. Wool is soft, warm and luxurious with properties imparting fine appearance, comfort and durability.

One of the most important requirements of a floorcovering is appearance retention. Wool is a superb choice for the face fibre with its easy care, natural resiliency, soil resistance, ease of maintenance and flame retardancy. This combined with its inherent anti-static properties makes wool a perfect choice for a luxury floorcovering.

## Dyeing

Wool is a very versatile fibre and can be dyed to a wide variety of fast shades from pale pastel to deep rich shades.

Crucial Trading has designed and produced a huge array of inspirational weaves - all using the highest grade wools - from textural little balls to sophisticated herringbones.

## The floorcovering

Crucial Trading has developed a unique range of exciting and texturally interesting floorcoverings which will complement both modern and classic design concepts.

## End-use

The wool range of floorcoverings can be used in most domestic locations with some products also being suitable for contract situations.

## Conditioning

As with all floorcoverings the wool collection should be conditioned in the area in which they are to be laid for at least 48 hours. It is recommended that the floorcovering is unrolled, laid out and cut to shape but oversize by about 60mm to allow for any change in dimensions during the conditioning period.

## Maintenance and installation

See pages 16 to 22.



# Seagrass

As its name implies seagrass is a grass which is grown in China and Vietnam in paddy-like fields. During the growing cycle the paddy fields are flooded with sea water. After harvesting, seagrass is dried and converted into a yarn which is suitable for weaving into a variety of designs. The product is then backed with a latex compound to produce a hard-wearing natural floorcovering.

## Dyeing

Seagrass is a hard impermeable fibre which is not possible to dye by conventional techniques so that most products are supplied in the natural coloured state or with the addition of a coloured yarn such as sisal.

## The floorcovering

Crucial Trading pioneered the use of seagrass as a natural, stylish and hardwearing floorcovering. There is a selection of different woven designs in the range, from the original natural colour to various designs with a natural seagrass warp and different coloured sisal weft yarns.

Seagrass is good quality but the spinning and weaving processes are unsophisticated and therefore inconsistencies in quality are likely. However, Crucial Trading's policy is to minimise these by regular product inspection for quality.

## End-use

Seagrass floorcoverings are naturally stain resistant, anti-static and hard wearing and can be used in most domestic locations and some light contract areas. However, in areas of heavy foot traffic or where castor chairs are used, the use of loose laid mats or protective pads for added protection is recommended.

Crucial Trading does not recommend the use of seagrass products on stairs.

## Moisture

Seagrass is a natural product and it is possible that if laid in areas of high humidity or dampness mould or mildew can form on the fibre. Normally this can be brushed off when it is dry. In exceptional cases the mould or mildew can be treated with a weak solution of bleach or a sterilising fluid such as Milton. If the dampness persists then it is possible that mould and mildew will reappear.

## Conditioning

Seagrass floorcoverings should be conditioned in the area in which they are to be laid for at least 48 hours. It is recommended that the floorcovering is unrolled, laid out and cut to shape but oversize by about 60mm to allow for any change in dimensions during the conditioning period.

## Maintenance and installation

See pages 16 to 22.

# Maintenance

This information deals specifically with natural plant fibres and although the methods can be used for the care and maintenance of wool products, other conventional methods can also be used on the wool range.

To ensure that natural floorcoverings keep their appearance it is necessary to maintain a regular cleaning routine including the immediate attention to any spillages.

Due to their nature, some natural fibre floorcoverings e.g jute and sisal (particularly the lighter shades), are prone to water marking when water is spilt onto them. To minimise the problem of aqueous borne stains and also to improve the overall staining properties of the product, Crucial Trading recommends that their natural floorcoverings are treated at the factory prior to despatch with INTEC, Crucial Trading's stain inhibition system.

The use of a barrier mat, e.g. coir at the entrance to premises greatly reduces the amount of dirt being walked into an area.

Natural floorcoverings are extremely absorbant and should therefore only be used indoors and away from areas of excessive moisture. Under no circumstances should they be wet shampooed or wet cleaned.

## Daily care

It is easier to remove surface dirt from a floorcovering than embedded dirt. A light cleaning with a non-beater bar vacuum cleaner will remove surface dirt before it becomes embedded in the floorcovering.

Because of their latex backing, which prevents dust and dirt build-up beneath the floorcovering, natural fibre floorcoverings offer fairly easy and basic maintenance and cleaning.

Crucial Trading recommends a suction cleaner without beater bars since the latter can cause some damage to the surface of the floorcovering.

In cases of heavy soiling with mud etc. the soil should be allowed to dry, then using a stiff brush along the weave structure, brush the soil and then vacuum with the suction cleaner.

Jute products or light coloured floorcovering are not recommended for areas susceptible to soiling or heavy use.

## General cleaning

It is recommended that all areas fitted with natural floorcoverings be given a thorough vacuum at least once a week using a non-beater bar suction type cleaner.

## Spillages

In the case of severe spillages the Crucial Trading Care and Cleaning Kit is recommended. The kit comes complete with cleaning solutions, applicators and full instructions.

Prompt action when dealing with spillages will minimise staining. The cleaning kit is available from Crucial Trading and it is recommended that this be purchased at the same time as the floorcovering so that prompt action can be taken in the event of an accident.

# Installation

As with all textile floorcoverings it is essential that correct installation techniques, materials, accessories and tools be used if a trouble-free installation is to be achieved.

The following instructions will assist in saving time on the installation and avoid costly call backs to carry out any remedial work etc. Prior to fitting, the floorcovering should be unrolled and examined for faults.

Valuable technical information is to be found in the following publications:

- BS 5325: 1996 Code of practice for the installation of textile floorcoverings
- Carpet Installation Manual published by RBI (Europe) Ltd for the National Institute of Carpet and Floorlayers

## Subfloor

Before laying the floorcovering the subfloor should be checked to ensure that it is in good condition to receive the floorcovering. The subfloor should be clean, free from contamination, smooth and free from indentations and ridges which could have an effect on the appearance and wear of the floorcovering.

When installing floorcoverings onto concrete or cementitious subfloors it is extremely important that the subfloor is dry and that the relative humidity is below 75%. This can be checked using a Hygrometer or other specialist instruments such as a Protimeter.

## Moisture

Floorcoverings made from natural fibres readily absorb moisture and can change in dimensions. The fibres react to moisture in different ways, for example sisal and jute products tend to shrink. Coir, however, reacts to moisture by expanding which can lead to wrinkling and buckling. On drying, coir tends to shrink, thus causing seams to open up. Extreme care in preparation must therefore be taken when installing these products.

## Conditioning

Natural floorcoverings should be conditioned in the area in which they are to be laid for a minimum of 48 hours. It is recommended that the floorcovering is unrolled, laid out and cut to shape, but oversize by about 60mm to allow for changes in dimensions during the conditioning period. If site conditions do not allow for the carpet to be completely laid out it should be removed from any packing and loosely rolled so that air can circulate through the product.

## Installation systems

Crucial Trading recommends two basic systems of installing their range of natural floorcoverings:

1. Direct adhesion to the subfloor
2. Double-stick system over a firm dimensionally stable uniform thickness underlay e.g. e.g. Crucial Trading's Double Stick Underlay, Duralay's Durafit and Tredaire Technics products

The use of blank gripper fixed around the perimeter of the area enables a neat finish to be achieved.

**Please note:** All secondary backed/wool products can be fitted using either the above methods or by using the standard stretch fit perimeter fixing gripper system over a good quality underlay.

# Direct adhesion

Also known as the direct stick method, the idea is to stick the latex backing of the natural product directly to the subfloor using a permanent flooring adhesive. This prevents movement in the floorcovering and therefore greatly improves the look and the life span of the floorcovering.



## Step 1

Lay the floorcovering out in the area and cut oversize by 60mm to allow for trimming in around the perimeter.



## Step 4

Lay the floorcovering into the wet adhesive. Repeat step 3 for the second half of the carpet.



## Step 7

Trim off the selvages and cut in the seam with a straight edge. With some coarse weaves it may be necessary to use scissors.



## Step 9

Trim the edges around the perimeter of the area and tuck in to form a neat edge finish. Glide the floorcovering after one hour.



## Step 2

Use a chalk line to indicate the position of seams.



## Step 5

Use a glider to ensure adhesive transfer to the back of the carpet.



## Step 8

Fold back both the unbonded edges of the floorcovering and apply adhesive using the notched trowel. While the adhesive is still wet bring the two edges of the floorcovering together and lay into the wet adhesive. Roll the floorcovering along the seam. A bead of edge sealer should be used along the seam to help prevent edge fray.



## Step 3

Turn the floorcovering back to about half its length or width and spread the recommended adhesive using a notched trowel of the correct depth to within 2.5 cm of the chalk line.

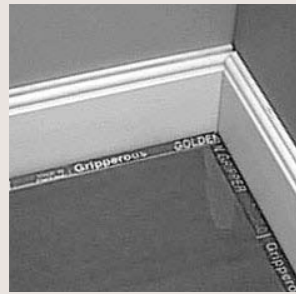


## Step 6

Position the second length of floorcovering overlapping the first length by approximately 3 cm and with a chalk line mark the position of the next seam. Fix the second length of floorcovering. Repeat step 3 for the second half of the carpet.

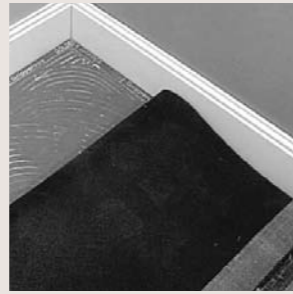
# Double-stick system

For the double-stick system of installation, Crucial Trading recommends the use of a firm, uniform thickness, dimensionally stable underlay such as Crucial Trading's Double Stick Underlay, Duralay's Durafit and Tredaire Technics products. The basic principles of all double-stick installation techniques are the same in that the underlay is fixed to the subfloor with a tackifier and the floorcovering is adhered to the underlay with a permanent adhesive. Although carpet gripper is not normally used in double-stick systems for conventional carpets, for added security and to minimise potential shrinkage problems, Crucial Trading recommends that blank gripper be used onto which the floorcovering can be stapled for extra security.



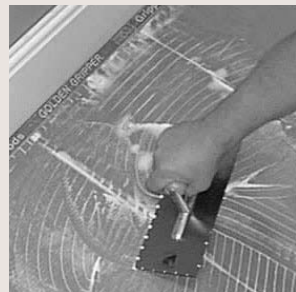
## Step 1

Fix blank gripper (no angled pins) around the perimeter of the room leaving a small gap approx. 2/3 the thickness of the floorcovering to form a gully for tucking in to provide a neat edge finish. The use of standard gripper is not recommended as pins may protrude through the floorcovering. Use appropriate raised base doorbars in doorways if required.



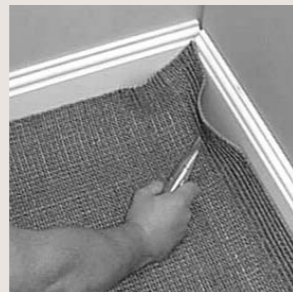
## Step 3

After the tackifier has dried completely the underlay is laid into the tackifier. Effectively this creates a new subfloor onto which the floorcovering can be laid.



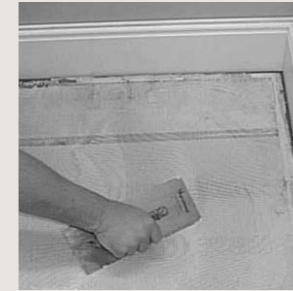
## Step 2

Ensure that the subfloor is clean and free from dust. Apply the tackifier using either a special notched trowel or a roller. Ensure that the tackifier is applied evenly without leaving pools in the low spots. It is important to allow the tackifier to dry completely before laying the underlay.



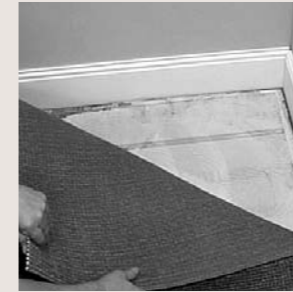
## Step 4

The conditioned floorcovering is laid out and roughed out to size. When the position of the floorcovering has been determined it is folded back to about 50% of its length (or width), so that the permanent adhesive can be applied.



## Step 5

Using a 2.4mm notched trowel the adhesive is applied to the underlay. Do not apply adhesive to a larger area than can be covered in the open-time of the adhesive.



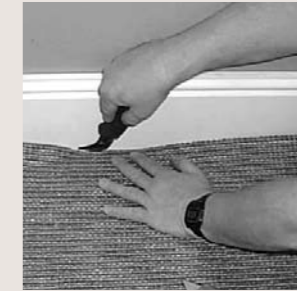
## Step 6

The folded carpet is then laid into the adhesive. The unadhered carpet is now folded back and the procedure repeated.



## Step 7

A glider, or similar tool, is then used to ensure adhesive transfer to the back of the floorcovering.



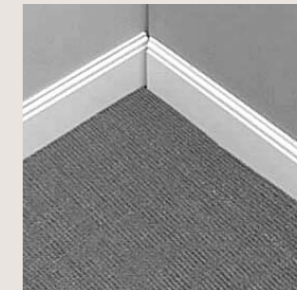
## Step 8

Trim off the excess floorcovering around the perimeter and tuck in using a tucking knife to ensure a neat finish.



## Step 9

For extra security the floorcovering can be stapled using an electric stapler e.g. a Maestri stapler, into the blank gripper.



## Step 10

It is advisable to allow the adhesive to set up before use. For multiwidth installations follow the instructions as for direct adhesion. Ensure that seams are at right angles to the seams in the underlay and that all seams are sealed with a seam sealer.

## Recommended adhesives

F. Ball and Co. Ltd.

Release flooring adhesive, F.40  
Permanent flooring adhesive, F3

Laybond Products Ltd.

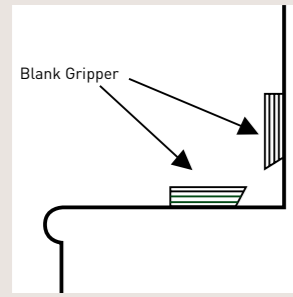
Release flooring adhesive, Multitack  
Permanent adhesive, CV and Multibond Gold

Tredaire Technics

Release flooring adhesive, TEC-T-1  
Permanent flooring adhesive, TEC-A-2  
Flooring adhesive cleaner, TEC-C-3

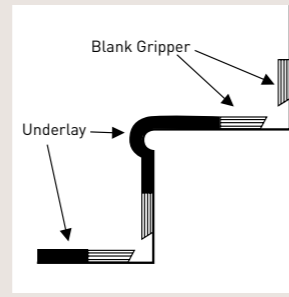
# Stairs

The following method is recommended for fitting natural floorcoverings on stairs:



## Step 1

Blank gripper is fixed to both the tread and the riser, in the crotch of the stair. The distance from the crotch of the stair to the leading edge of the gripper should be approx. 1.5 times the thickness of the floorcovering.



## Step 2

The recommended underlay, as for flat installations, is adhered to the tread and the riser, from the gripper on the tread to the gripper on the lower riser, using a permanent adhesive on the tread. On the risers staples can be used to secure the underlay.

Starting from the top of the stairs the floorcovering is adhered to both the tread and the risers using a permanent adhesive. At the crotch of the stairs the floorcovering is pushed firmly into the gap formed by the grippers and the floorcovering stapled into the blank gripper.

When installing natural floorcoverings on stairs in areas of heavy useage or contract situations the use of nosings is recommended.

