

# Linear Axes — Terminology

This page clarifies the NILAB terminology for linear motion, so that the overlapping terms (**Stage**, **Slide**, **Linear Unit**, **Module**) are not confusing.

## The terms at a glance

| Term                       | Meaning                                                        | NILAB examples                                                                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Linear axis</b>         | The complete motion module: drive + guide + carriage + encoder | GDM, LM, RM, MCSS, ULCO, NL-BCJ                                                     |
| <b>Linear stage</b>        | A complete axis with an integrated guide and carriage          | GDM Tubular Linear Stage, LM Linear Stage, RM Linear Stage, NL-BCJ Eco Linear stage |
| <b>Linear slide</b>        | A compact slide with an integrated drive                       | MCSS Mini Linear Slides                                                             |
| <b>Linear unit</b>         | A modular, often belt-driven, unit                             | ULCO Belt-driven linear units                                                       |
| <b>Module</b>              | A motor module with a carriage and guide                       | GDM (module version)                                                                |
| <b>Linear motor (bare)</b> | The motor only — needs a guide, carriage, and encoder          | NL, GD, GD <sub>i</sub> , L/LK, NLNS                                                |

## Why the terms overlap

- **Linear Stage** is used for GDM, LM, RM, and NL-BCJ — all are complete axes with an integrated guide and carriage. - **Slide** is used for MCSS — a compact slide with an integrated drive. - **Linear Unit** is used for ULCO — a modular, belt-driven unit. - **Module** is used for GDM — the motor module version.

The distinction is mainly about **construction and drive type**, not performance:

- **Stage** = integrated guide + carriage (direct-drive motor). - **Slide** = compact, integrated drive (miniature motors). - **Unit** = modular, belt-driven. - **Module** = motor module with carriage.

## Related pages

\* [Linear axes selection](#) \* [Glossary](#)

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