

How To Hang A Gate

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1. Choosing Your Gate and Posts

It is usually better to have a gateway larger than you think you will need.

Don't put your posts in before you have your gate on site.

Wooden gates often look better for domestic situations, metal gates come in a variety of designs for commercial and agricultural use or simple utility.

The posts on which the gate hangs should be large enough to support the weight, a 3.6m gate needs at least a 175mm diameter post.

2. Safety

You will need safety boots, protective eyewear, protective gloves and possibly a helmet. You should also do a basic and informal risk assessment as a bare minimum.

3. Positioning Your Posts (for a 3.6m wooden gate)

The ground should ideally be level and you will need to decide how you want your gate to swing.

If you want your gate to swing through 180 degrees you must remember to so position the hinges on the face of your gate post as to leave room for this to happen.

If you hang your gate from, for instance, the inside of your post it will mean that you can use the full width of the gateway.

Check for power lines, drains and telephone cables.

4. First Post

This is the post you will hang the gate from.

The hole for this post should be at least 90cm deep and big enough to take the post and concrete.

Stand the post upright in the hole, nail a few nails into the bottom section so that they stick out and provide purchase for your concrete. Then fill the hole to ground level with water and postcrete. If the post is in very loose ground you might want to nail a

piece of rail to the bottom before concreting in, the rail acts as “feet”. Make sure that the post is plumb vertical on both planes or axis.
Allow the postcrete to set.

5. Attaching Gate Hinges

Attach the hinges to the wooden gate - these are the pieces of metal that form the gate eyes. They are often two sided metal clamps.

Put the hinge onto the gate so that the band of the hinge is at 90 degrees to the upright of the gate. It is normal to drill holes in the gate to attach the screws and bolts in order to avoid cracking. The easiest way is to clamp the hinge onto the gate using a G clamp and then carefully drill the holes ensuring that they are straight and lead through to the hinge holes on the other side. Attach the bolts or screws. (The holes for screws should not go right through the gate).

Using a large spirit level mark a straight line down the centre of the face of the post on which the gate will be hung. It is also possible to use a piece of weighted string to mark the two points for the gate hooks.

Present the gate to the post, use a spacer underneath the two ends of the gate so that the gate is “suspended” at it’s hanging height. It is important to make sure that the gate is level otherwise it will not swing correctly.

Mark on the vertical line on the post at the bottom of the top hinge where you will need to drill the hole for the top hook to thread.

Usually, for a 19mm gate pin, a 22mm hole will be required for the threaded end. The auger bit you use must be long enough to drill through the post in one go.

The top hole needs to be drilled through the post.

The bottom hole should be marked in the same way and at the same time as the top hole.

The bottom hole should be drilled only half way through the post if you are using a hook to drive (pointed) rather than a hook to screw (threaded) as for the top.

Drive your top hook to screw (threaded) into the hole until the thread is exposed at the far end and there is a suitable gap to allow for the gate swinging once it is hung on the hook. It is important when you are driving the top hook in that you ensure it goes in straight rather than at an unintended angle.

Drive the point of the bottom hook so that both hinges are the same distance out from the post otherwise at best your gate will hang at an angle, at worst it won’t fit on the hooks.

6. Hanging The Gate

Lift the gate onto the hooks. This may require two people.

Then put a spirit level on top of the gate and adjust with the top hook to screw until the gate is level.

If the gate is under tension trying to fit over the two hooks because they haven’t been put in evenly then the gate will warp or twist.

The gate should now swing freely across the gap you are trying to cover.



7. The Second Post

Swing the gate closed and mark on the ground where you want your post at the far end.

Dig in the post at the far end of the gate as for the first post.

It is important not to put the second post in before hanging the gate as the chances of it fitting correctly are very slim.

Once the postcrete has set swing the gate to the closed position and attach the closure mechanism.

If you are using a bolt to close the gate then attach it to the gate first and then mark the position for the hole into which the bolt should fit. The same should work for a drop down closure if you are using one to hold the gate when open or closed. It helps to make the hole slightly larger than needed to allow the gate to drop a fraction.

8. Securing Your Gate

It is important that if your gate is likely to stand open for any length of time it should be firmly attached to something. Gates being blown about are not likely to last long. You can use a third post to fasten it back to or a drop down pin if there isn't likely to be a lot of pressure on the gate.

If you are using a safety hook to close the gate then attach it on the same side as your third post so that it can be used to hold the gate closed or open.

9. Difficult Situations

Hanging a single gate on a level surface is relatively simple but there are more problematic situations. If you have a gateway which is not simple then it is a good idea to at least consider getting a professional fencer to help you.

10. Gate Swinging onto Road

The best advice we can give is that if a gate is likely to cross the public highway then find another solution. Double gates sometimes solve the problem, or moving the gateway back further. If neither is possible then consider a cattlegrid.

11. Gate on a Slope

A gate on a slope always has to swing downhill, otherwise it will ground out. The catch should be stronger than you might otherwise use in case the gate develops a bias and tends to swing outwards on its own.

12. Double Gates

Hanging double gates is not usually a job for the amateur.

It can be done by adapting the method described for a single gate but even skilled fencers describe it as the most difficult job in fencing. If you must have double gates consider employing a fencer to hang them as lining them up is very difficult.

In choosing double gates consider whether you want an equal split or whether you could use a vehicle and a passenger gate. If delivery drivers have to open two gates and secure them back each time they drive through there is a stronger temptation to leave them open. If you are using this system it is often possible to secure both gates to a central “lift-in, lift-out” post. This can be done by creating a hole in concrete into which the post can slide. Remember to attach some kind of handle for removing the post, a bar through the middle sticking out each side will work. Then proceed to hang your gates as described, being careful to position the second one correctly.

