

How to construct workable gates

1. Have very strong gateposts for wide hanging gates. You probably want to use a very tall gatepost so you can add support to the gate by running a cable from the top of the post to the latch side of the gate and tightening it with a turnbuckle.
2. Measure the opening for the gate. Measure from top to bottom on both sides, and measure the distance between the gateposts at the top and bottom to be sure the gate is a true rectangle.
3. Work on a flat surface to construct a frame for the gate that is one inch shorter than the horizontal measurement made in the previous step so that way the gate can swing without interruption. Use pressure-treated two-by-fours to make dado joints or rabbet joints for the corners. Block these joints and use large wood screws.
4. Brace the basic frame with a strong diagonal strut. The alignment of this supporting structure is very important. The low end of this bracing bar must be placed on the hinged side of the gate, allowing the high end to be attached to the left side. For more support, a cable and turnbuckle can also be used. To be effective, this system must be set on the opposite diagonal from the wooden brace.
5. Nail the pickets or boards or other fencing trim in the proper pattern to match the remaining fence.
6. Set the gate on blocks in the same position you want it to be when you finish. Wire it into place temporarily with guy wires if necessary.
7. Attach hinges using large wood screws. Attach the gate-side hinged leaf first. Choose the largest wood screws that will go through the holes of the hinges but not through to the backside of the wood. Gates are typically too heavy for butt hinges, so strap hinges are usually used. For large gates, you'll get more support from a la and strap hinge system.
8. Attach the gate post hinge leaf with similar screws.
9. Undo the guy wires and remove the blocks. If needed, trim the end of the gate so it can swing freely for attaching the latch.
10. Set the latch or bolt system of your choice.
11. Place a stop-board on the post behind the latch.

