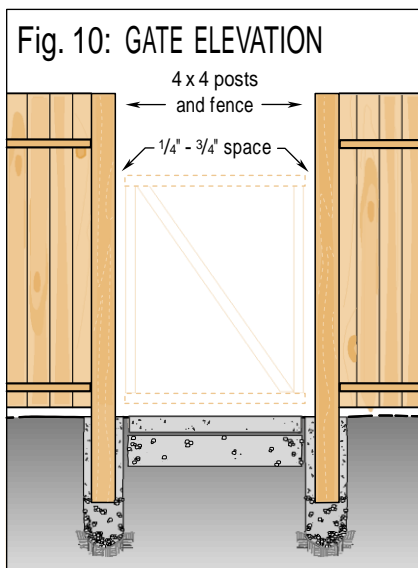


Build and hang the gate

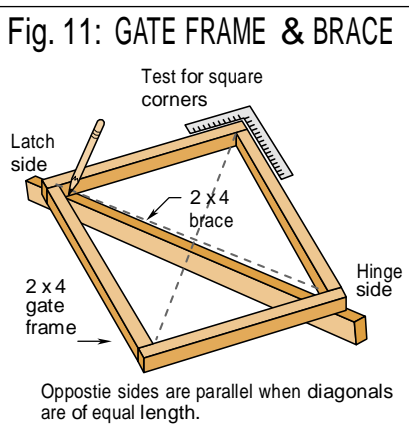
There's something deeply satisfying about a gate that opens easily, swings freely, and closes securely with a reassuring click. Building such a gate requires you to exercise care and craftsmanship in each of the five steps of gate construction: setting the gate posts, building the frame, adding fencing boards, hanging the gate and installing the latch.

Gate posts should be set deeper than your fence line posts—about 1/3 their *total* length—and anchored in concrete. This is necessary because of the need to withstand additional stresses. Posts also must be carefully plumbed so that their inside faces are exactly parallel.



When measuring the opening, make sure to allow for clearances on the hinge and latch sides of the gates (Fig. 10). For gates with standard 2x4 framing and 4x4 posts, leave a 1/2- to 3/4-inch space between the latch post and the gate frame. On the hinge side, it will depend on the hardware you use. About 1/4 inch is usually sufficient.

Once the posts are set, begin assembling the frame (Fig. 11). Cut the pieces to length and assemble them on a flat surface, making

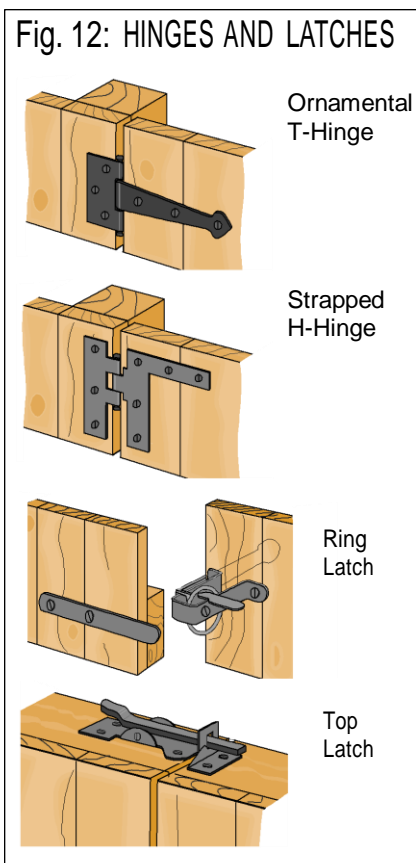


certain that the gate frame is in square. Use a carpenter's square to check the corners and then measure the diagonals. When the diagonals are equal, the sides of your gate are parallel and the frame forms a true rectangle. Use wood screws and a good exterior wood glue instead of nails for added strength.

To measure the brace, lay the frame down on top of the 2x4 bracing member and mark your cut lines. The easiest cut is a single, angled cut so that the brace will run from hinge side bottom to latch side top. Cut the 2x4 just outside your marks so the brace will have a tight fit, and attach the brace to the frame with nails or screws.

Now add the boards, starting from the side where the hinge will go. If the last piece is not flush with the frame edge, either space the boards slightly or plane a little from each board until they fit. Then drill your pilot holes and fasten the hinges to the gate. There are a large variety of hinges and latches to choose from. (Fig. 12 shows the most common.)

At this point you're ready to hang the gate, but before you do anything, you'll want to check the fit by moving the gate in position and trimming any areas that are too tight to provide ample clearance. Now prop the fitted gate into the opening using blocks to support it, or have a helper hold it in position, and mark the hinge and screw hole positions on the post. Once the holes are drilled, replace the gate,



and attach the hinges to the post. Finally, mount the latch assembly on the gate and post, using screws a little longer than usual to help the latch withstand the punishment it will take through years of use.

Finally, it's time to congratulate yourself on a job well done.

