

Fixing steps

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- **Old step.** Use the spade to take the old step.
 - Hit the ground next to the bottom of the step and uncover the old wood.
 - Use the spade as lever and take the wood out.
- **Cut the wood** to the size wished for the step.
 - A thick plank wood is best, but also timber could do, but it may need to be replaced a couple of times per year.
- **Wooden step.** Place the cut of wood on the place where the step will be.
 - Ensure the cut is slightly inclined backwards, so when the posts are placed it does not lean forwards. (If it is slightly inclined forwards the step may 'fall' and may need to be fixed again).
 - Also, ensure that the step is levelled with the ground, so it does not stick out nor is too low.
- **Posts.** Cut the posts around 2 vertical lengths of the step - so the posts are deep and hold the step tight.
 - Ensure that one side of each post is cut in V.
 - With a hammer, place one post on one side (with the V side at the bottom) and hit until is mostly levelled with the step.
 - If the post sticks out a bit, use the saw to cut the top that sticks out. Ensure to cut it in a vertical line, so water slides rather than stays on top of the wood, rotting it.
- **Drainage.** Once the posts are put, there will be a space left between the soil and the wooden step. Place stones behind the step as well as soil. This will help with drainage and reduce quick rotting. If the stones stick out, use the hammer to press them down.



Images: Placing stones behind step (left), pressing down stones with hammer (right).



- **Levelling.** Add any soil and piece of grass that was put aside when the old step was taken to put on top of the step. Soil will sink with time, so it is OK if it is a bit over the step. We need to ensure that the wood in the step does not stick out because it can pose a tripping hazard. We also do not want that, with usage, the step is 'kicked' and moved forward. So, the step must be levelled. Use the spade to level the ground between the new and the top step.

Images: Levelling the step with soil (left), pressing down the soil with feet (middle), and step finished (right).



- **In general:**

- Ensure ground is flat between steps (the one before and the one you are fixing).
- Ensure that the post does not stick out of the step as it could be a tripping hazard.
- Whenever you can, assess if there is need of a step, or if two steps could be put together. Remember that steps should be visible, clear, and that, whenever possible, there should not be a large slope between steps.

Image: Finished steps.



Thanks to Simon Wrigley for sharing his knowledge on how to fix steps.

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