

Wooden gates – Help / Advice / After care

Why do gates warp/ bend / twist? Because it is in their very nature to do so is not quite the answer we're all searching for, but in essence that is the answer. So what causes the timber to bend and twist? Also, what measures we can take to minimise this effect happening in the first place?

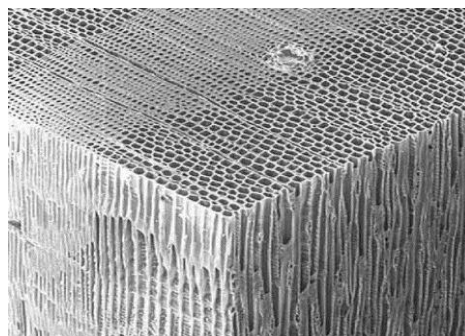
Some basic truths

1. Wooden gates will warp / twist. We can only take the steps listed at the bottom of this page to try and minimise this as much as possible.
2. When it is wet, wood **will** absorb moisture
3. When it is dry, timber **will** dry out.
4. All wood moves
5. Hardwood's bend and twist just the same as softwoods, sometimes more

So what causes your timber gates to twist?

There are several causes why your wooden gates move excessively and the most common one is the timber drying out. This is more noticeable in the summer months when the weather is hot.

Timber is composed of long fibres which would look essentially like a box of straws. This composition of fibres is designed to support the tree and allow the movement of water to the top of the tree. It's like a large sponge full of water.



If one side of the gate is in the sun and other is in the shade, the one in the sun will shrink and therefore bend towards the sun.

On double gates, if one gate leaf had more moisture in it than the other then this is when you get one leaf bending more than the other.

Steps to take to try and prevent your gate from twisting.

1. Apply a coat of stain/oil once your gates are fitted to avoid moisture ingress. (Keep water out)
2. When the gate is not in use, **always** keep the top and bottom bolt shut. This is to help prevent any twisting / warping. We advise two bolts per gate.
3. Treat both sides **without** allowing each side to dry in-between coats – staining or oiling one side of a gate and leaving it to dry before doing the other side, puts your gate at risk of twisting or warping. This is because you have created unequal surface tension within the timber and also because the unpainted side will try and absorb moisture, which will cause movement within the timber.
4. Stain/oil the timber in the same direction as the grain.
5. Coat the end grain of timbers well – it is most susceptible to sucking in water.
6. Do paint the bottom of your gate, any timber left untreated will suck up moisture. Modern treatments should allow the wood to breathe.