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# Vinyl Fence Installation Tips:

## INSTALLING POSTS AND PANELS

**Skill Level: INTERMEDIATE** Give these projects a try if you're a confident DIYer with a good working knowledge of a variety of tools. They can take a day or more to complete. If you can build a birdhouse or install a ceiling fan, your skill level is probably appropriate.

### ✓ MATERIALS

- Vinyl Fence Posts
- Vinyl Fence Panel Mounting Brackets
- Vinyl Fence Panels
- Gravel
- Concrete
- Water
- Saw
- Drill with Bits
- Pencil
- Tape Measure
- Carpenter's Level or Post Level
- Work Gloves
- Ear Protection
- Safety Glasses

In this series, you'll learn how to plan and install a fence in your yard. In this set of instructions and accompanying video, you'll learn how to install posts and panels for a vinyl panel fence. Before you start working, refer to the information in this series on *Choosing and Planning Your Fence* and *Layout and Digging Post Holes* at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos). Different fence systems require different assembly procedures. Follow the instructions for your fence.



## SETTING VINYL FENCE POSTS

**When working with most pre-built panels, you will set a post, attach the panel to that post, then attach the next post to that panel, and so on. This ensures your posts are in the correct position.**

- 01 Verify that all fence posts are of the proper length. If they are too tall, cut them and put the cut end in the hole so all fence post tops will be uniform.**
- 02 Install panel brackets on the vinyl fence posts following the manufacturer's instructions. Following are common instructions:**
  1. Measure down 2" from the top of the post (without the top) and make a mark for the top bracket. This measurement will change as your panels "stair-step" up or down grades. See Step 05.
  2. Measure the distance from the top of the top rail to the top of the middle rail, and transfer that measurement to the post.
  3. Measure from the top of the middle rail to the top of the bottom rail, and transfer that measurement to the post.
    - **TIP:** The position of each post in the layout will determine which sides of the post get brackets. End posts get brackets on one side, line posts get them on opposite sides, and corner posts get them on two adjacent sides.
- 03 Your vinyl posts may require you to insert a 4" x 4" treated lumber post inside for added strength. Always reinforce the gate posts with a treated lumber post inside.**

### IMPORTANT

Before you begin this project, call 811 to be connected with your local utility companies. Make sure that the site you have selected and where you will dig does not have underground utility lines that can be damaged by digging tools. If you have additional questions, discuss them with a Lowe's associate or call a professional for help.





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### SETTING VINYL FENCE POSTS (cont.)

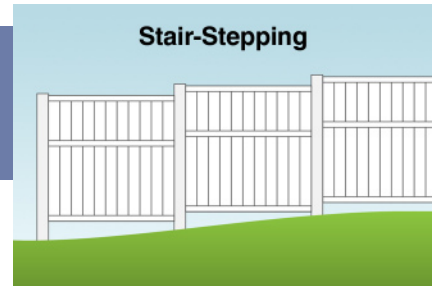
**04 Attach the brackets at the marked locations on the first post with screws, making sure the brackets are centered.**

- **TIP:** Use a slow speed on the drill to minimize the chance of stripping a screw.

**05 If you're working on level ground, attach brackets on the next few line posts in the same manner.**

- If you're working on a hill, you may have to adjust bracket positions to compensate for any grade changes. Use the stair-step method to follow the ground contours, keeping the panels at least 2" above the ground to allow for yard work. To determine where to position the brackets for grade changes:

1. Starting at the highest part of the grade, account for how much of the post will be in the hole and add 2" for clearance. This is where the bottom of the bottom bracket will be located on the post.
2. Next, measure *up* from the bottom of the bottom rail to the bottom of the middle rail on the panel, and transfer that measurement to the post. This is where the bottom of the middle bracket will be located on the post.
3. Measure *up* from the bottom of the middle rail to the bottom of the top rail and transfer that measurement to the post. This is where the bottom of the top bracket will be located on the post.
4. Once the post is set and the panel is attached and level, set the next post in the hole against the panel to mark the position of the next bracket. Continue this procedure on the subsequent posts and panels.



**06 Add gravel in the bottom of the end post hole for drainage; local building code may recommend how much to add. Make sure the tops of your posts end up at the correct height.**

**07 Set the end post in the first hole. If it's next to a structure, make sure to leave enough room for the top cap.**

- Make sure the post is in line with the string.
- **TIP:** Ask a friend to hold the post in place or use clamps and braces.

**08 Add dry or pre-mixed concrete following the manufacturer's instructions.**

**09 Work the concrete to about 2" below the surface; this space will be covered with dirt later and seeded with grass or covered with mulch or ornamental gravel.**

**10 Use a post or carpenter's level to verify that the post is plumb, adjusting the post as needed.**





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### SETTING VINYL FENCE POSTS (cont.)

**11 If necessary, cut panels to fit at corners or other areas following the manufacturer's instructions.**

- Some panels can be cut at the plank joints.
- Other types of panels may require disassembling the unit with a 5-in-1 tool and rubber mallet. Remove as many pickets as needed, then reassemble with vinyl cement.

**12 Set the panel in the brackets.**

- Use blocks to help hold the panel in position.

**13 Secure the panel with screws. Be sure to use a screw in each hole.**

**14 Next, mark the exact location of the next post: the width of the panel plus the brackets.**

**15 At the next hole, add the gravel base and set the post in the hole, making sure it's at the correct height.**

- **TIP:** On level ground, you can use a level to make sure posts are at the same height.

**16 Secure the post to the panel with screws.**

**17 Check for plumb, and use braces and clamps to hold in place.**

**18 Add concrete, following the manufacturer's instructions.**

**19 Double check for plumb.**

**20 Continue setting posts and panels in place. Only do a few at a time so the concrete has time to set.**

The next step is to attach the gate. You'll learn how in the printable instructions and video titled *Vinyl Fence Installation Tips: Attaching the Gate* available at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).



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