



# How to Remove a Tree

A tree that is dead or dying poses a danger if left standing. Dead branches can easily fall and a decaying tree can be a health hazard because of mold and bacteria. Live trees may need to be removed if they are obstructing other trees or coming into contact with a house or electrical wires. Use these steps to remove a tree.

## Steps

- 1 Determine if the tree needs to be removed.**
  - You might only need to remove a few branches if the tree is interfering with another object. If you are unsure if the tree is dead or dying, you can call an arborist or tree doctor to diagnose the problem.
- 2 Clear the area of objects.** Check to make sure the tree isn't caught up in wires or other trees. Make sure there is room for the tree to lie flat on the ground.
  - This might involve estimating the height of the tree.
- 3 Establish which way the tree naturally leans.** Take a step back so you can see the entire tree and the surroundings.
  - A tree will be much easier to remove if you can fell it the way it's organically angled. It's possible to fell a tree in any direction though.
- 4 Check the trunk of the tree for decay and evidence of hollowness.**
  - A decayed or hollow trunk is unpredictable. You might not be able to fell it to direction you intend because a decayed tree can collapse at any point.
- 5 Set up at least 2 escape routes.** These routes should be clear of obstacles. Escape routes are used if the tree begins to fall out of control.
- 6 Use the correct-sized saw for your tree.**
  - Small trees can be sawed with a handsaw. You will need a chainsaw for trees with a trunk diameter of more than 1 foot (30.48 cm).
- 7 Decide where the tree should fall.**
- 8 Cut a 45-degree V into the tree in the direction you want the tree to fall.** This is called the undercut and it should be about a quarter of the tree's diameter deep.
- 9 Cut straight into the oppose site about 2 inches (5.08 cm) above the undercut.** This is called the backcut and it releases the stress the undercut places on the tree.
- 10 Move out of the way when the tree begins to fall.**

**11 Remove all the branches.** Start from the bottom of the tree and work your way up to the top.

**12 Cut the bare log of the tree into 2 foot (60.96 cm) pieces.**

**13 Remove the tree stump.**

- Drill holes into the stump with a drill. Pour wood-eating chemicals into the holes.
- Let the stump decay away on its own. This takes anywhere from 5 to 10 years.
- Dig the stump out yourself with a pick and a spade

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### Tips

- You can cut a 90-degree V into the tree for the same result. A 90-degree cut is safer in that it gives the tree more room to fall, but it is more difficult to make.

### Warnings

- Do not attempt to remove an extremely large tree by yourself. The best option is to hire a professional.
- Do not remove a tree that lies on the border of your property and a neighbor's. You will have to consult with your neighbor (the other owner of the tree) about the removal process for legal reasons.
- Do not make your backcut lower than your undercut. This renders the fall uncontrollable.

### Things You'll Need

- Handsaw
- Chainsaw
- Gloves
- Drill (optional)

- Chemicals (optional)
- Spade (optional)
- Pick (optional)

### Sources and Citations

- <http://www.treehelp.com/howto/howto-remove-a-tree-1.asp>

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