

STAIR SAFETY GATES COMPARED

I remember feeling that sense of pride as son number one started making his way around the house, the feeling of pride was soon replaced with the sense of fear as he made his way up the stairs, only to slip back down four times faster! we had a lot of learning to do & quickly!

Installing a stair safety gate can save you a lot of tense, nervous moments.

Here we review 3 different models:

M o d e l	 <p data-bbox="389 1228 617 1260">BabyDan Flexi Fit Wood</p>	 <p data-bbox="755 1228 917 1260">Ikea Patrull Fast</p>	 <p data-bbox="1047 1228 1307 1260">Lindam Easy Fit Alarm Gate</p>
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	<p>This is the wooden version of the Babydan Flexi Fit Metal gate. Apart from the material, the differences are minimal - the wooden version is slightly larger than the metal one, opening to 110.9cm, slightly larger than the metal 109cm. This is the maximum width as there are no extension bars available for this gate.</p> <p>The wooden gate is easy to open and close with one hand.</p> <p>You choose the direction it'll open when you fit it.</p> <p>It's well designed so you won't be able to extend it beyond its maximum distance.</p> <p>On the downside, small cramped text and diagrams at the back of the instruction book slows down the speed of assembly.</p> <p>It comes with paper templates so you can get the position right before you start drilling, but the two templates are easily mixed up. This isn't too much of a problem, unless you are fitting this around stairs as you'll need to fit the gate so it opens away from the stairs.</p> <p>It's a good choice for the top of the stairs, particularly if you want your safety equipment to blend in with wooden features and banisters.</p>	<p>This gate is very safe and well worth picking up if you happen to be in the Swedish superstore.</p> <p>Clear instructions and large diagrams make the gate very easy to put together and use.</p> <p>Assembly itself is a little bit more fiddly - it took more than 25 minutes to fit this gate, while the others took as few as five.</p> <p>The gate is easy to open and close with one hand.</p> <p>You choose the direction it'll open when you fit it.</p> <p>Its designed so you won't be able to extend it beyond its maximum distance</p> <p>There are no extension bars available for this gate, so the greatest width it can cross is 110cm.</p> <p>It is possible to save money on this gate by using a free 'Ikea Family' membership card.</p>	<p>This pressure-fit gate from Lindam was Which magazine's top Best Buy.</p> <p>It achieved excellent results in their safety tests, as well as being quick and easy to assemble.</p> <p>It took their testers only five minutes to assemble.</p> <p>For added security, the gate comes with an alarm.</p> <p>It sounds as soon as open the gate and gets louder in less than 60 seconds.</p> <p>It can be mounted to wood banisters or plaster walls with the pressure fittings, so you don't need to drill holes and cause any damage.</p> <p>One drawback is that the catch is quite thick and tricky for small adult hands or those with less than nimble fingers to squeeze and unfasten.</p> <p>There is also a metal bar at ground level that forms part of the frame that the gate sits in. This could be a trip hazard, but white paint makes it easier to see.</p>
Pro's	Easy to use.	Clear large diagrams.	Very safe, easy to assemble, quick to fit.
Con's	Will leave holes in your walls, difficult to follow instruction book.	No instructions for use on stairs, no extension bars available.	Potential trip hazard, thick catch

Safety Gate Reviews: Features explained

Types of stair gate

Metal or wood

These are usually 'walk-through' gates with a side-or centre-opening swing door. They are flexible and convenient.

Retractable mesh or fabric gates

These are less common. They attach at one side of the lintel and stretch across to the other side. They're most useful if you have a particularly awkward gap to bridge?

Removable travel barriers

These are handy for holidays or when visiting friends. They are made of mesh stretched across a frame. However, as they don't open, they're more suited to occasional than long-term use.

Fitting Types

Screw type fittings



Screw

This fitting is anchored to the wall with metal screws. Good for use at the top of stairs as there is no frame, so no tripping hazard. It is probably the sturdiest fitting type but it will leave holes in your wall once you've removed it.

Pressure

Pressure type fittings



This type of gate or barrier is held in place by pressure at four points. Some have a disc that you rotate by hand, others are fitted using a spanner. The gate sits in a frame that doesn't move? It's better for your walls than a screw fix but the frame can be a trip hazard.

Pressure (mesh barriers)

This type of gate doesn't sit in a frame, and comes completely away from the wall when you release the pressure. It is useful for travel but inconvenient for daily use as it is difficult to assemble.

On the plus side, mesh barriers don't damage the walls and are quick to remove but they are tricky to put in place.

Additional features

One-handed release



Mesh barrier pressure fitting

Many stair gates can be opened with one hand. This is very convenient if you are carrying laundry or if your partner is bringing upstairs a welcome cup of tea!

Pressure gauges

Pressure-mounted gates are held in place by outward pressure. Pressure gauge indicators ensure the gate is fitted correctly - if a strip of red can be seen then there isn't enough pressure. If yellow can be seen then wall cups must be used.

Wall cups

Some pressure-mounted gates come with plastic cups that can be fixed to the wall to hold the spindles in place. This will make the gate more secure.

Safety Gate Reviews: FAQs

How soon will I need a stair gate?

You'll need a stair gate from 8 months but for safety's sake, get one as soon as your child starts to show signs of toddling - they'll soon be moving faster than you can.

How many gates will I need?

With stairs you'll need a pair of gates. The set at the top will stop them falling down the stairs and set at the bottom will stop them climbing in the first place. But even in a bungalow, barriers can keep children out of areas where they might get hurt. Barriers can be used where you don't have a door - for example, between a kitchen and the dining room.

I've heard you shouldn't put a pressure fix stair gate at the top of the stairs, is this true?

Most manufacturers recommend that you use wall cups with pressure gates at the top of stairs.

How do I know if it's securely set up?

If you fit a gate at the top of stairs, make sure it opens towards you, not over the stair. If you lean on the gate as you open it, you may fall forwards.

Information provided by: "Which" Magazine