

- [Tree stakes \(2\)](#)
- [Sledgehammer](#)
- [Tree staking straps \(2\)](#)



Photo: istockphoto.com

Get the Goods

You'll need two stakes per tree, plus straps to tie them to the trunk. To DIY your own stakes, taper the points of 6- to 8-foot long, 2x2 pieces of lumber, and use wire housed inside rubber hosing for ties. Or you can purchase stakes, made of treated wooden posts, and nylon or rubber ties from big box home improvement stores or nurseries.

Drive the Stakes

Place each stake on opposite sides of the tree, about 15 to 18 inches ¹¹_{deep} away from the trunk, ensuring they will clear the root ball. Drive each stake into the ground with a sledgehammer, about 18 inches deep.

Pick the Right Spot

In general, to anchor trees exposed to high winds or on slopes, the straps should be placed about 18 inches above the ground. In the case of a tree with a flimsy trunk that can't support itself, place the straps about 6 inches above the spot where the tree can stand upright.

Support the Trunk

Tie the tree to each stake with flat tree staking straps, so that they are taut but not so tight that the tree cannot move. You want to let the tree sway a bit in the wind, which encourages strong root development. Flat straps provide a large surface area to distribute pressure and avoid damage to the trunk.

Be especially cautious if using homemade wire-in-hose straps: Stretch them too tight and they'll injure the sensitive tissues just under the bark, essential for taking up water and nutrients.

Untie in a Timely Manner

Remember, you should only stake a young tree for one [growing season](#), until the root system has had a chance to spread out and set in. After removing the straps, you can leave the stakes in the ground as protection from foot traffic and lawn equipment if they don't pose a hazard. If you choose to remove the stakes, dig gently around the base of each one to loosen it, being careful not to disturb the roots. Keep your straps and stakes if they are still in good condition to be used for the next tree you plant that requires staking.

With good care and a little luck, your new trees should bring joy to your family and beauty to your property for generations.