

Old post concrete removal from the ground to replace a broken post

There are a variety of methods and plenty of advice available out there for the removal of an old, broken fence post and it's concrete stump. This is precisely why we invented the *Phoenix I* post holder, to preclude the need to dig out that concrete stump! None of the methods to remove a concrete stump from the ground are easy and some are even down right dangerous! Removing the concrete from the ground may be necessary if you want to replace a broken post and do not want to move the post location. Our primary business is not removing old post remnants but we offer a few tips:

1. Do not remove your concrete by trying to dig around it until you can pull it up from the ground. If you try this it will result in a hole MUCH larger than your original 8" diameter hole. For example, if you dig a new hole with a radius that is about 2 ½ inches larger than your concrete so you can get your hands/arms down to grab and lift the concrete out, your new hole (13-inch diameter) will be greater than 2 ½ times more volume than the original hole. That means your new concrete will be 2 ½ times bigger and heavier than the original. Imagine digging that out the next time the post breaks!
2. Using a 20-lb demolition bar (available from the hardware store) to break the concrete into pieces and remove from the hole. This method will not expand the size of the original hole (at least not as much). Warning: this is hard work!
3. Rent a demolition hammer from your local tool rental center. This will cost you \$40 for a couple hours and it is still hard work, although not as hard as using the manual demolition bar.
4. Dig around the concrete but only down about 4 inches so that you can tie a chain around the top of the concrete stump and use a car jack to extract the concrete from the ground. Alternatively, a 12-ft or 10-ft 4" X 6" board could be used to create a lever to lift the concrete out – note that an 8' length may not be long enough to generate adequate force to extract the concrete. This will also leave a larger hole than the original but at least it will only be near the surface (4" deep). Before attempting to extract the concrete, use a long, thin spade shovel to dig down as deep as you can adjacent to the concrete all around the circumference of the concrete to loosen the concrete as much as possible to facilitate extraction from the ground. Be sure to cover the chain with an old piece of carpet or heavy blanket while putting tension into the chain. The chain will have more than 2000 lbs of tension and if it should break or come loose it can create devastating injury or damage. Because of the potential danger, we do not recommend this method as a first choice.
5. For the same reasons that we do not recommend #4, we also discourage the use of chains hooked to a vehicle and then attempting to pull the concrete out.
6. Dig a hole to the side of the concrete stump and push the stump toward the new hole and pull the stump up and out. You will need to fill in the side-hole with dirt before installing the new post or you can put the old concrete stump in the new side-hole.
7. Hire a handy-man to do the difficult task of removing the old concrete post stump(s) before installing your new post(s) with a Phoenix I post holder(s).