

Stiles along the route and alternative options

There are over 50 stiles on the Dartmoor Way walking route. It is our aim to work with the National Park and landowners to gradually replace some of these stiles with gates. However, for those of you who may have difficulty negotiating stiles the following information tells you where the stiles are and suggests some alternative walking options.

Section 1: Ivybridge to Shipley Bridge

There are 2 stiles on the field path where instruction 3 says 'look out for a huge oak tree and footpath through a gate to the left'. These can be avoided by instead continuing along the minor road. The official route through the field exits onto this minor road a few hundred yards further along.

There are 4 stiles on the next field path where instruction 3 says 'Just past the gates to Great Aish turn right through a gate at a footpath sign'. These can be avoided by instead continuing along the minor road and re-joining the official route by turning left at the next road junction and walking uphill into Aish.

All these 6 stiles are considered easy for dogs to negotiate

Section 2: Shipley Bridge to Ashburton

There are 5 stiles on the field path beyond Button Farm, where instruction 3 says 'Where the lane ascends very slightly then levels, look for a sign on the right - 'Button' - and turn right down the farm drive'. Some of these stiles are not easy for a dog to negotiate. There is no short alternative route, but continuing along the road does eventually lead into Buckfastleigh.

Section 3: Ashburton to Bovey Tracey

There are 2 stiles on the field path out of Ashburton, where instruction 1 says 'About 75yds later, just before the road curves left, turn right and ascend steps.' There are 2 more stiles on the next section of field path before Waterleat Bridge, one of which is not easy for a dog to negotiate. The alternative is to follow the minor road out of Ashburton towards Waterleat Farm and then cross the bridge at Ford 129 and re-join the path, where instruction 1 says 'At the end of the wood follow the track right, uphill. Ascend steadily, then descend (muddy in winter) to reach farm buildings at Lower Whiddon Farm'.

There is 1 stile where instruction 9 says 'Where the lane starts to descend more steeply turn right over a stile into woodland (Parke estate). There is no suitable alternative route, but continuing along the road leads to the old railway line, which forms the Dartmoor Way route out of Bovey Tracey.

Section 4: Bovey Tracey to Moretonhampstead

This section is free of stiles until North of North Bovey, where there are 7 stiles on the field paths after instruction 7 'As the lane starts to bear slightly left turn right over a stile into a field.' These can be avoided by bearing right at the

previous junction – Pound Cross - and following the minor road into Moretonhampstead. All these stiles are considered easy for dogs to negotiate.

Section 5: Moretonhampstead to Chagford

There are 2 stiles on Butterdon Hill, after instruction 1 says ‘Where the lane bears sharp right turn left down the drive to Butterdon Cottage. Pass between the house and a barn conversion and through a gate onto the lower edge of Butterdon Hill.’ Both stiles are considered easy for dogs to negotiate. The alternative is to follow the lane sharp right and then take the next left and follow the road to re-join the official route where it emerges onto this road at Cranbrook.

Section 6: Chagford to Okehampton

There are stiles at the entrance and exit to Blackaton Copse, see the start point for instruction 2. These stiles are considered easy for dogs to negotiate. There are gates next to both stiles, which may be unlocked. If they are locked, the alternative is to continue along the minor road turning right at the next junction and emerging onto the minor road where instruction 2 says ‘the entrance to Gidleigh Mill. At Coombe Farm turn right through a gate on a bridlepath and cross the Forder Brook.’

There are 3 stiles on the field path North of Throwleigh Church, where instruction 4 says ‘Cross over to find steps and a gate leading into the graveyard of the church of St Mary the Virgin’. These stiles may be a problem for dogs to negotiate. The alternative is to turn right before the entrance to the church and follow the minor road to re-join the official route when it emerges on to this road and follows it towards South Zeal.

Section 7: Okehampton to Lydford

There are 6 stiles on the path between Sourton and the turn off to Bridestowe, described in instruction 6. Some of these are ladder stiles which are difficult for dogs to negotiate. An alternative would be to descend onto the Granite Way (the old Plymouth to Okehampton railway line) near Sourton Church and follow this south to Lake Viaduct, where there is a path down to Lake, across the A386, and the route is re-joined by turning left at the next junction.

Section 8: Lydford to Tavistock

There are no stiles on this section of the route.

Section 9: Tavistock to Shaugh Bridge

There are 4 stiles on the path South of Hoo Meavy, where instruction 5 says ‘Cross a stile by the bridge into a riverside meadow on a footpath to Goodameavy.’ One of these is not dog friendly. There is no short alternative route, but there is the option to follow the road through Hoo Meavy, turning right at the junction and heading back to re-join the official route at Goodameavy.

There is a stile at the start of the track into Dewerstone, where instruction 6 says 'Turn right over a stile by the gate into Goodameavy (National Trust).'

There is a gate next to this stile which may not be locked. Again there is no short alternative route, but there is the option to follow the road under the old railway line, turning left and left again at the next 2 junctions and continuing to the Shaugh Bridge car park.

Section 10: Shaugh Bridge to Ivybridge

There is a stile on the path between Shaugh Bridge and Cadover Bridge. There is no alternative as the road through Shaugh Prior and up to Cadover Bridge can be quite busy and is really not a safe option. This stile is considered easy for a dog to negotiate.

There are 5 stiles on the path along the River Erme between Hall Farm and Ivybridge, from where instruction 5 says 'A stile in a beech hedgebank gains a path junction on the edge of a field.' These stiles are considered easy for dogs to negotiate. The alternative is to continue straight on instead of turning left at this point. The alternative path has several gates, but no stiles on its way to the minor road into Ivybridge, where it re-joins the official route.

High Moor link section 1: Buckfast to Hexworthy

There are 2 stiles after Mill Leat, where instruction 2 says 'Look for a footpath heading left through a gate. Head across the field on a narrow and tricky path.' One stile is not dog friendly. The alternative is to continue up the steep minor road and then take the next left back down to re-join the path where it emerges onto the minor road.

There is 1 stile after Holne, where instruction 4 says 'Turn right through a gate on a footpath signed to New Bridge. This marks the start of your descent into the Dart valley.' This stile is dog friendly. There is no alternative route, as the road from Holne to New Bridge is not considered a safe option.

There are 4 stiles on the path from Huccaby Bridge to Hexworthy, where instruction 10 says 'Immediately over the bridge climb the wall ahead (via granite 'steps' in the hedge bank).' Some of these stiles are not dog friendly. The alternative is to follow the minor road up into Hexworthy, turning right before the Forest Inn and re-joining the official route where it emerges from a farmyard.

High Moor link section 2: Hexworthy to Tavistock

There are no stiles on this section of the route.