

# How to Measure a U-Bolt

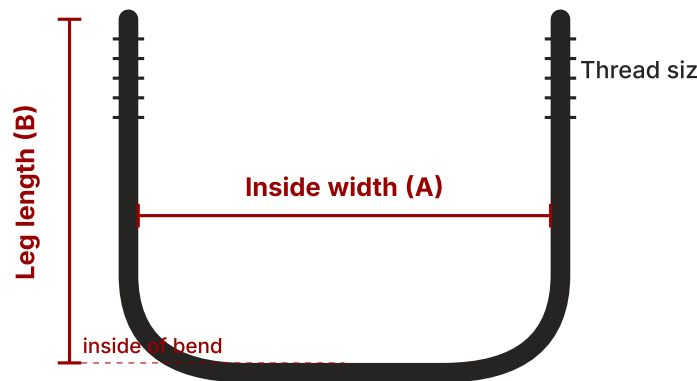
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U-bolts trip up more orders than any other fastener — almost always for the same reason. Here's how to measure one right, and the naming trap to sidestep.

A U-bolt takes **four answers**: its bend shape, its thread size, the inside width, and the leg length. Easy enough — except for one twist in how round-bend U-bolts are named that sends most wrong orders out the door. Let's clear that up first.

## The trap: round-bend U-bolts are named by pipe size, not by what you measure

A round-bend U-bolt is sized to the **nominal pipe** it wraps — and nominal pipe size isn't the actual measurement. A "2-inch" pipe is really **2.375"** across the outside. So if you measure 2-3/8" inside your U-bolt and ask for a "2-3/8" U-bolt," you'll get the wrong one. Tell us the **pipe size it goes around** (or what it's clamping), and the trap disappears.



The three dimensions to give us — plus the bend shape below.

## Step 1 — pick the bend shape



### Round bend

A U-shaped curve. For round pipe and tube. Sized by the **pipe** it fits.



### Square bend

Two right angles. For square tube, angle iron, and timbers. Sized by inside width & height.



### Semi-round

A flat bottom with rounded corners. A middle ground for larger pipe and special fits.



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## Step 2 — take the three measurements

- A

Inside width — the gap between the two legs, measured on the inside. For a round bend this is the inside diameter; for a square bend it's the inside width of the opening.
- B

Leg length — measured from the **inside of the bend** to the **end of the leg**. This sets how deep it reaches and how much thread you have to work with.
- C

Thread size — the diameter and pitch of the threaded ends (for example ½-13). Measure it like any bolt, or see how to measure a fastener.

## Pipe size vs. what you measure

If you're wrapping standard pipe, give us the **pipe size** — not the outside diameter you measured. Here's how the two line up for common sizes:

| NOMINAL PIPE SIZE | ACTUAL OUTSIDE DIAMETER |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1/2"              | 0.840"                  |
| 3/4"              | 1.050"                  |
| 1"                | 1.315"                  |
| 1-1/4"            | 1.660"                  |
| 1-1/2"            | 1.900"                  |
| 2"                | 2.375"                  |
| 2-1/2"            | 2.875"                  |
| 3"                | 3.500"                  |
| 4"                | 4.500"                  |

Standard pipe (NPS) outside diameters. Notice none of them match their name — that's the whole trap. If you measured an OD that's close to one of these, that's your pipe size.

