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twist  (twɪst)

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v. twist·ed, twist·ing, twists

v.tr.

1.

a. To wind together (two or more threads, for example) so as to produce a single strand.

b. To form in this manner: *twist a length of rope from strands of hemp.*

2. To wind or coil (vines or rope, for example) about something.

3. To interlock or interlace: *twist flowers in one's hair.*

4. To make (one's way) in a tortuous manner: *twisted my way through the briar patch.*

5. To cause to rotate or turn in another direction: *twisted their heads around at the sound of the doorbell.*

6. To impart a spiral or coiling shape to, as by turning the ends in opposite directions: *twisting wire into a loop.*

7.

a. To turn or open by turning: *twisted off the bottle cap.*

b. To pull, break, or snap by turning: *twist off a dead branch.*

8. To wrench or sprain: *twist one's wrist.*

9. To alter the normal aspect of; contort: *twist one's mouth into a wry smile.*

10. To alter or distort the intended meaning of: *The cross-examiner twisted the words of the witness.* See Synonyms at [distort](#).

11. To alter or distort the mental, moral, or emotional character of: *The trauma twisted the child's outlook.*

v.intr.

1. To be or become twisted.

2. To move or progress in a winding course; meander: *The river twisted toward the sea.*

3. To squirm; writhe: *twist with pain.*

4. To rotate or turn in another direction: *The owl's head twisted around toward me.*

5. To dance the twist.

n.

1. Something twisted or formed by twisting, especially:

a. A length of yarn, cord, or thread, especially a strong silk thread used mainly to bind the edges of buttonholes.

b. Tobacco leaves processed into the form of a rope or roll.

c. A loaf of bread or other bakery product made from pieces of dough twisted together.

d. A sliver of citrus peel twisted over or dropped into a beverage for flavoring.

2. A spin, twirl, or rotation.

3. *Sports*

a. A complete rotation of the body around its vertical axis, as in diving and gymnastics.

b. A spinning motion given to a ball when thrown or struck in a specific way.

4.

a. The state of being twisted into a spiral; torsional stress or strain.

b. The degree or angle of torsional stress.

5.

a. A contortion or distortion of the body, especially the face.

b. A distortion of meaning: *gave my words a misleading twist.*

6. A sprain or wrench, as of an ankle.

7. A change in direction; a turn: *a sharp twist in the path.*

8. An unexpected change in a process or a departure from a pattern, often producing a distortion or perversion: *a twist of fate; a story with a quirky twist.*

9. A personal inclination or eccentricity; a penchant or flaw: *an odd twist to his character.*

10. A dance characterized by vigorous gyrations of the hips and arms.

Phrasal Verb:

twist off

To remove by twisting.

Idioms:

leave to twist/leave twisting in the wind

To abandon (someone) to a bad situation, often as a recipient of blame: *"If our envoy was so blameless, why had she been left to twist in the wind?"* ([William Safire](#)).

twist (someone's) arm Slang

To pressure or coerce: *If you twist my arm, I'll stay for a second beer.*

[Middle English *twisten*, to squeeze, be divided, from *twist*, a divided object, fork, rope, from Old English *-twist*; see **dwo-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

twist·a·bil i·ty *n.*

twist a·ble *adj.*

twist ing·ly *adv.*

twist y *adj.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

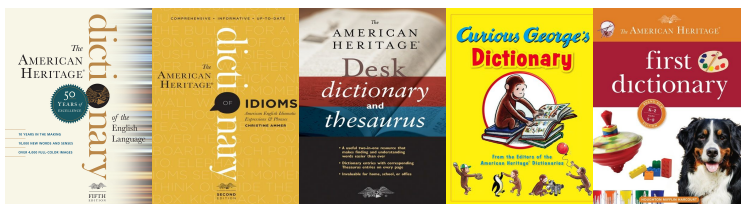
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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