

# The Origins of Western Superstitions



Have you ever knocked on wood? Why did you do it? Did anything happen afterward? Explain why you think people knock on wood and how you think this superstition came to be.

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Do you believe in this superstition? Why or why not?

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## The True Origin of “Knocking on Wood”



This expression comes from Pagans, who believed that all living materials had spiritual properties, including trees. They believed that when trees were cut down, the spirit inside the tree would die, and the trunk would become hollow. People feared that evil spirits, like sprites, could take over the tree and concoct ways to bring pain and suffering to people living in the area.

Fortunately, if someone knocked on the wood, it would drive away the malevolent spirits and prevent any potential misfortunes from occurring.

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Why do you think that “knocking on wood” would drive away the evil spirits in the trees?

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Can you think of any other ways to ward off the evil spirits of the trees? Explain how below.

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