

-기로 들면

if one really sets out to

Supposes someone taking a thing up in earnest — and warns that there would be no end to it. 들다 here means to set about something.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Any verb	-기로 들면	따지다 → 따지기로 들면
Variant	-기로 들자면	따지기로 들자면
ㄹ stems keep the ㄹ	-기로 들면	만들기로 들면
Second clause	endless, unmanageable	끝이 없다, 한이 없다
Verbs	things with no natural end	따지다, 찾다, 세다
Never takes tense	plain stem only	따졌기로 들면 is wrong

WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -기로 들면 to a verb stem — no vowel rule, ㄹ stays, no tense in front. The variant -기로 들자면 also occurs.

The second clause reports that the thing would be endless or unmanageable: 따지기로 들면 끝이 없다.

A short list of verbs carries most of the usage — 따지다, 찾다, 세다, 말하다, 파고들다. All of them are activities that could in principle go on forever.

The tone is one of gentle warning: you could pursue this, but you should probably not. 끝이 없다 and 한이 없다 are the usual conclusions.

IN USE

- 하나하나 따지기로 들면 끝이 없습니다.
If you set out to pick over every point, there is no end to it.
- 흠을 찾기로 들면 못 찾을 것이 없다.
Set out to find fault and there is nothing you will not find.
- 이유를 대기로 들면 백 가지도 넘을 것이다.
Start offering reasons and there would be over a hundred.
- 파고들기로 들자면 며칠이 걸릴 문제다.
If one really got into it, this would take days.
- 직접 만들기로 들면 못 만들 것도 없지요.
If you really set about making it yourself, there is nothing you could not make.

6 잘잘못을 가리기로 들면 서로 상처만 남는다.

Set out to apportion blame and all that is left is hurt on both sides.

COMPARED WITH

-(-으)려면

-(-으)려면 supposes an intention neutrally; -기로 들면 supposes pursuing it in earnest, and warns where that leads.

따지려면 근거를 대세요. (if you want to argue) / 따지기로 들면 끝이 없다. (if you really start)

-다 보면

-다 보면 predicts where continued effort leads, usually somewhere good; -기로 들면 warns that it would never finish.

하다 보면 늘 거예요. (you'll improve) / 따지기로 들면 끝이 없다. (it'll never end)

-(-으)ㄹ 양이면

양이면 sets an intention as a premise and states its requirement; 기로 들면 sets it as a hypothetical and states its futility.

기왕 할 양이면 제대로 해라. (do it properly) / 따지기로 들면 끝이 없다. (don't start)

WATCH OUT

X 하나하나 따지기로 들면 금방 끝납니다.

O 하나하나 따지기로 들면 끝이 없습니다.

The second clause reports that the thing would be endless. A quick finish contradicts the construction.

X 어제 따졌기로 들면 끝이 없었다.

O 따지기로 들면 끝이 없다.

-기 never carries tense, and the construction supposes rather than reports.

X 잠깐 쉬기로 들면 끝이 없다.

O 하나하나 따지기로 들면 끝이 없다.

The verb must name something that could go on indefinitely. A brief rest has a natural end.