

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

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Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Tools for the job/Preventative thinking

I see people every week that injure themselves by the improper use of tools. Use a screw driver, not a knife for example. Do not hold a piece of wood with your left hand and use a nail gun in your right hand. I was told this by a master woodworking craftsman. I asked him for his best piece of safety advice. Of course he said this with his safety glasses on. There is no excuse for the lack of safety glasses. It is true for you cooks, construction workers, painters, gardeners, home plumbers. Wear them, just do it.

Soft leather gloves are great for many things. My wife is safety minded but even she refuses to wear gloves when using the glue gun. She is a talented craft person. Yet she burns her finger every single time she uses that glue gun.

I have a rather extensive home workshop. The power tools are all stronger than average. I have found that weak tools tend to bind when cutting. Things get thrown around. Your hand gets jerked, then cut. This just happened to the wife of a craftsman when she was helping him out. I can almost guarantee trouble when you try to make a tool do something it is not designed to do.

Part of using the right tool is making sure you use a big and powerful tool for the big cut but also use the smaller tool for the small cut. The most common saw injury I see is when somebody is cutting a 2 inch piece of wood with a 10 inch circular saw. If I had a nickel for every time I saw this injury. So many think that if they just buy the big tool then they can do any job. Nothing can be further from the truth. Small jobs require small tools as much as big jobs require big tools. This may be my best piece of craftsman advice that I can give.

Many have fallen off flimsy ladders. They must be heavy and steady. Always level them before use. Believe me it is worth the extra 30 seconds to steady things. If there is not enough time to do it the right way then wait. There is never enough time to do it right but always time to do it over? How will your schedule be affected when you lie in your hospital bed with a leg up in a cast?

I love to watch construction workers. The young guys often jump around, wear sneakers instead of work shoes and go without proper clothing. The older guys wear the thick stuff. They sometimes spend 5 or 10 minutes just to steady a ladder or scaffolding before getting on it. When I have spoken to these older people they all give me the same story. They are careful now because they already made the mistake when they were younger. Why do the younger workers rarely take advantage of the more experienced? Lessons are usually free.

With the availability of tool superstores and helpful, knowledgeable craft sales people we can do more by ourselves. Do your homework first, go to the library, ask questions, take advantage of your neighbor who did it before. Tools can be dangerous and you are worth more than they are. If you do nothing else, at least wear protective clothing.

I have lectured about the use of appropriate clothing for industrial situations. It is an important, broad topic.

The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.

Venice Plastic Surgery, Venice Wound Center, Lakeside Medical Center

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