

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Wounds - Yard work injuries/Preventative thinking

It amazes me how many people try to clean out wet grass from under their mowers. First of all you should not cut the lawn when wet. Second, stop the mower for cleaning. Also, many have slipped on a wet yard and cut their feet or worse. This all happened somewhere in your own neighborhood.

I always wore thick leather football or baseball shoes, with spikes, when mowing. This was to keep me from slipping on the small incline in my old back yard. I wear thick leather gloves when I do yard work. I use sun block and usually put on a light cotton long sleeve shirt and blue jeans. When using hand pruning pliers, always look when cutting. Just the other day another person almost cut off a finger because they were pruning a branch and looking at the wife who was calling for him. Sunglasses are good for eye protection and are useful when working in bright sunlight. I dislike hats, my head gets hot. Normally this area is good for getting rid of body heat. A visor may be the thing to use.

You have decided to repair that sprinkler head, replant that shrub and cut the lawn. You are young so who cares that it is 90 degrees with an equal amount of humidity. Young and old get into trouble with heat exhaustion every year and not just during the summer. Heat stroke and deaths do occur. Heart attacks are more likely. What can we do? Use common sense. Do your work earlier in the day before it gets too hot. Drink an appropriate amount of fluid. I recommend cool or room temperature water, not ice water. I also drink something like Gatoraide® from time to time. Never drink alcoholic beverages. Alcohol is a diuretic and may worsen the situation. Those who drink alcohol have more accidents. Finally split the job into smaller parts and take a few days to do them. Get a friend to help. Hire a professional.

Never dig a ditch and leave it uncovered. People will dig holes on Saturday so they can plant on Sunday. Your neighbors or family members may trip or fall because of these holes. If one person digs a hole then certainly someone else will fall into it. Finish the job today or protect the area. Put up a barrier BEFORE you start digging. Get a board to cover the hole ahead of time. Even small holes break ankles. Always keep children and pets away from the work area.

The same can be said for cleaning up the job site. Even in the middle of a job I sometimes clean up completely, just to get organized. Tools left or forgotten will be trouble. You will trip over them, step on them, run your mower over them or lose them. Keep organized and periodically clean and organize the job site. I use this method while working in the garage as well. Clutter leads to accidents.

Lastly I want to tell you to read those instruction manuals for the tools you use and for those chemicals you are spraying. I can tell you that every time I spray something even if it is just a fertilizer I wear a mask. My neighbors probably think I am crazy because I wear a surgical mask and it may look odd but I do not care.

I have always felt that if something can go wrong it will go wrong. This happens. But using my boy scout motto of "be prepared" has gotten me through. If you already know what to do then the "unexpected" can never happen. Part of knowing what can happen is preventative medicine. Since something bad may happen, what can we do now to keep it from happening altogether. A preventative measure can minimize the severity of an incident. Always think ahead.

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

Venice Plastic Surgery, Venice Wound Center, Lakeside Medical Center

Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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