



Spring DIY without the injuries!

Almost half of us will take on do-it-yourself home improvement projects, according to insurance underwriters. Whether it's fixing a leaky faucet, repainting the living room, or repairing the exterior of our homes, it is vital to keep personal safety in mind.

AVOID OVERCONFIDENCE. Injuries can strike even the most experience do-it-yourselfer. Do not try to use a product or tool in any way other than how it was intended. Safety features exist for reason and trying override, alter or remove guards or other safety devices can be very dangerous.

INSPECT YOUR POWER TOOLS. Before using power tools, inspect them carefully for damage or wear. In particular, look for frayed power cords, cracked or broken casings, and bent parts. Always replace or have a professional repair any damaged tools.

USE TWO HANDS AND TWO EYES. Power tools require both hands and both eyes for safe operation. Use clamps or vises for hold work in place. Watch for hand placement when using tools that cut.

PROTECT YOURSELF. Invest in snug protective eyewear that fits your face. This is one of those items that is worth spending a little more, and get in the habit of putting them on when doing any project. When evaluating a job, make sure you consider you have appropriate respiratory protection from the materials and tools.

FOLLOW THE 4:1 RULE. Because so many projects involve using a ladder, be sure to use the 4:1 safety rule. For every 4 feet of ladder, the base should be 1 foot away from the wall or object it is leaning against.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK. Research your project fully. Read all the labels on the materials you buy, particularly safety instructions. Get familiar with your tools before starting the project. The more you know, the safer you and your family will be.

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS. Despite inspiration from all the DIY television shows, only take on projects that you are comfortable handling. If you do not feel equipped or sufficiently experienced, call in the professionals.