

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

Started a phillips head drywall screw into a board without predrilling. I held the screw with my left hand, and drove the driver with my right. I set the screw on the board, the phillips bit in the screw head, started the drill and pushed down. Unfortunately, I pushed down harder than I should have, and before the screw took. Why? I was tired and in a hurry: two of the most common causes of accidents. But what happened? Well, when the screw went sideways and I pushed the phillips bit into the board (denting it nicely) I happened to have my thumb in the way. Yep. I pushed a spinning phillips bit right through my thumbnail and out the other side. Took almost no effort, flesh and nail being relatively soft compared to a phillips bit. Missed the bone, thankfully, and didn't even kill any nerves. But ick, I got to clean out my thumb over the sink, pull fatty tissue from a perfect little hole in my thumbnail, and then go to the emergency room. Hurt like the dickens, too.

Advice

You hurt yourself with a cordless drill? Only an idiot could do that! Yep. When you're tired and in a hurry, you are an idiot, and yes, you could even hurt yourself with a pile of Q-tips. Could, I said.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I wanted to drill a pilot hole through two pieces of 3/4 x 3/4 strips. In a hurry I decided to just hold them together and not use a clamp-vise or some other stabilizing device. When to make a long story short when the drill bit exited the second piece of wood it entered my finger tip to the bone. Fortunately, it was a small, short bit and did not do more damage.

Advice

Don't use your fingers as a clamp.

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Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I had lost the chuck key to my 1/2" portable drill for the umpteenth time. I was in a hurry to finish a project, so I had the brilliant idea of chucking the bit, then holding the chuck in my hand while running the drill to snug it up. This didn't get the bit tight enough to keep the chuck from spinning around it, so I decided to stick another drill bit into one of the chuck key holes so I could have more leverage. Stupid!!! The "chuck key" bit got wrenched out of my hand immediately, taking a considerable gouge out of the side of my middle finger.

Advice

Always use the chuck key! I now own three to increase my chances of being able to find one.

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Hurt but OK

Description

Was trying to remove a tree which was only about 15' tall. Its position and branches would not allow a saw to fit. I was drilling holes side-by-side to weaken the wood, using a spade bit in a 1/2' drill. I was wearing gloves, which seemed safe and sensible. The drill had a D-handle which my hand was in. The spade bit caught and the high torque drill started twisting my hand. The glove would not let my hand come out. The result was a severe twist to my wrist and thumb.

Advice

Think through the ways you could be hurt, including how certain safety measures might work against you.

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Hurt but OK

Description

This is a silly example of stupidity and carelessness mixed together with a dash of rush. I was trying to complete some small mobile deskfile units and was drilling the lock holes. It was almost knock off time and I was almost finished. The last two I rushed by holding the completed drawer and drilling. Too bad about my fore arm in the way of the forstner bit!! it left a lovely little pattern as it rotated along my arm. I was not badly hurt but I have some scars, that remind me of the incident regularly.

Advice

As simple as it sounds always try to think "where the cutter might go when it has completed its proper job!

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Advanced

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

While tightening the pilot bit on a hole saw, I held the saw in my left hand and the screwdriver in my right. Trying to get the bit really tight, the screwdriver slipped off the drill bit and into my left palm. A couple stitches would help but I think I'll be OK.

Advice

Even screwdrivers can be damaging. Watch how you hold objects and try to keep body parts out of harms way.

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Hurt but OK

Description

I was installing auger type spade bit (3/4 in) into my 90 degree Makita drill with a paddle type switch. I rested the drill against my stomach as I tightened the chuck. In doing this, I depressed the paddle and it turned on, quickly winding the bit up in my "T" shirt. It raced up toward my throat, wrapping the shirt onto the bit as it went. The pain was terrible and I couldn't turn it off because the paddle switch was also wrapped up in my shirt. I attempted to keep it from my throat as I kicked the plug from the outlet. After unwrapping the drill from my shirt, I inspected myself for damage. It had ripped all the hair from my chest (1" wide and 13" long) and didn't leave even one hair standing. As I am very hairy, it left a bright red streak that burned for hours. No other damage but left me shaking and respectful. I also lost my nick name of Mr Safety.

Advice

I had never had a problem in leaving a drill plugged in as I changed bits (35 yrs worth) But with this drill, (90 degree and especially with the paddle switch) I needs to be done. I tried to do it again two days later and then decided there was no safe way to change bits without first unplugging this fur eater. The paddle switch is too large to not hit.

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was using a corded hand drill to put a hole in the inside top of a door way (the hole was for an alarm system switch that would activate when the door was opened). I was standing on a ladder looking up at the drill above my head. Once the bit took the saw dust began to fly and got in my eyes. I wasn't wearing safety glasses, so to avoid more saw dust I looked down while continuing to drill. Unfortunately, I was too close to the drill, and my hair came in contact with the chuck. Before I knew it the chuck had completely wound itself into my hair and drew my head snug up against the drill, pinning my hand on the trigger. I could release the pressure on the trigger enough to turn the drill off, but I could not get my hand off the drill, nor my hair out of the chuck. A coworker came over and unraveled me. I wasn't hurt bad, but the drill had scalped me, leaving a 1" by 6" bald spot right down the middle of my head.

Advice

Wear safety glasses, keep power tools well away from your body and your hair, don't wear loose clothes or jewelry while working with power tools.

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

Don't try this at home. My garage shop gets unbearably hot in the summer. On Saturday I started the first of several steps to keep things cool by cutting some air vents in the roof soffit (the underhang). I'd done this on another part of the roof using a cheap jigsaw, but found it to be very slow going. A buddy of mine suggested I try a hole saw. That sounded like a fairly good suggestion, so I bought a 4" hole saw and a mandrel (more expensive than I thought) for my 1/2" drill. With the 4" hole saw, I'd need to drill three holes for each vent cover. The first 20 holes went fine. Occasionally, the saw would bind and the drill would stall. I'd get a pretty good torque on my wrist before I could release the trigger, but it didn't seem to be much of a problem. Then, on the 21st hole, the saw caught, and the drill spun in my hand. Unfortunately, as it spun, I somehow engaged the trigger lock, which allowed the drill to continue to spin at full speed. As you might have guessed, I couldn't hold on to the drill, and it dropped (mind you, I'm at the top of a stepladder) to the ground, still running at full speed. It started whipping around like a snake on the cement. Finally, it managed to wedge itself between some work I was doing, and I hopped off the ladder and pulled the plug. The mandrel's fine, the hole saw is toast, but very fortunately, there was no blood. I'm going to keep going to church.

Advice

Advice? Good question. Obviously, be very careful with hole saws. Probably trying this at the top of a ladder wasn't the best idea, but that really wasn't the cause of the problem -- it just made it more dangerous when the mishap did occur. Keeping two hands on the drill is important (but I was) and as is being very familiar with where the trigger lock is located (I wasn't).

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

I posted a report yesterday about an accident I had where a 4" hole saw on a 1/2" drill spun out of my hand and lashed around wildly on the ground. I posted the same report to a woodworking forum, and I've added their advice on how to avoid this below.

Advice

One woodworker suggested I brace the drill against something, so if the hole saw binds, and the drill spins, it can't go anywhere. This sounds similar to bracing the workpiece that is being drilled in a drill press. I'm sure you don't want to get your hand between the drill and where ever you are bracing it. By the way, the number of accident stories about hole saws that were posted as followup messages to my post on the woodworking site was scary. I think I'll just try to stay away from hole saws.

Tool Type

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Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was working on 4" round ductwork for a dust collection system. I was screwing a 4" wide strip of sheet metal to one piece of the duct in preparation for butt joining it to another piece of the same size without a crimped end. While drilling in the first self tapping screw, it caught the small strip of metal and spun it around. A jagged edge caught me on the thumb near the nail and caused a decent sized gash. Since a large area of skin was still attached but clearly dead, I went to my family doctor the next day.

Advice

Use clamps or vice grips in this situation. For people who do not do a lot of sheet metal work, predrilling even for self tappers will prevent frustration. Wear gloves as much as you can during sheet metal work.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

Was using a 1/2-inch, high torque drill to make holes for running Romex in basement ceiling joists. The bit was a 1/2-inch, extra long spade bit because I was drilling through a triple 2 X 10 beam. I was holding the drill with my left (non-dominant) hand, and didn't bother with the removable supplemental handle because I was working in close quarters. The bit bound up several times but I just fought it because I was tired, fussy and almost finished. Well, the bit bound up really good when I hit a knot or a nail. The drill spun counterclockwise, ripping itself out of my hand. Before I could react, the drill handle came around and smacked the back of my hand, breaking the metacarpal of my ring finger. I could feel the broken ends of the bone in my palm.

Advice

1) Slow down and think -- a minute or two to scope the job is a much better use of your time than six weeks in a cast; 2) Use all available safety equipment, including auxiliary handles; 3) If the tool doesn't want to do the job easily, don't force it; 4) When you find yourself in one of those testy moods, leave the power tools alone; go sweep the floor or hug your kid.

Tool Type

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

A fellow worker was about to use the hammer chisel feature of a heavy duty hammer drill. The selector that changes whether or not the bit inserted rotates was still on "rotate" and the chisel promptly got stuck. He wrestled with it for a minute or so and I decided to take over to "show him how its done". I whacked the business end with a hammer and "presto" out she came. In the process a small chard of the chisel shot into me with a pinprick effect. I figured "no trouble- it's only a flesh wound". The tiny wound started to bleed profusely - so I found a bedsheet and wrapped it around my midsection figuring it had to stop sometime. Not so, after 3 hours of bleeding I finally accepted that a visit to the ER was necessary. The doctor removed the tiny piece that measured less than an eighth long and a sixteenth wide. The initial wound was tiny, but as the piece shot through flesh, it took a 90 degree turn and ended up an inch away from the "entry site". Thank goodness it wasn't an eyeball!

Advice

Never, never use a hammer to remove another hardened steel item. As mentioned above, the wound bled continuously as (I found out) blood does not clot when there is metal involved. Also, it is a good idea to seek medical attention a little sooner than your machismo desires.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was installing a pocket hole screw into oak. I had the 8" square head screwdriver bit in a portable drill. With my left hand, I was holding the boards inline and had the drill in my right hand. I then did a "no-no" by having the bit pointing almost directly at my left hand. I was pushing hard with the drill, since it was oak; the bit jumped out of the screw, entered my hand between the thumb and first finger, went between the bone and the fleshy part at the bottom of the palm and exited down toward the wrist. I was very lucky, in that the square head bit did not tear any vital nerves etc. I let it bleed well to clean out the wound before going to the hospital for stitching and anti-biotics.

Advice

1. Always work away from you 2. Take a minute and use clamps 3. With pocket hole screws or any screw for that matter, check that your screwdriver is straight with the screw head.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

While working on a mouse trap car for school, I was holding the bottom of the lego car and the top of the mouse trap. While drilling through it went through quite fast, since it was going fast it went right through where I was holding it and the bit went into my finger. It didn't go completely through my finger, but made a nice little hole. It bled a lot and I was damn near fainting. I washed it out for a while put pressure on it and then put a bandaid on and had to change it a lot. But, in the end I was pretty much ok.

Advice

Pay attention to what you are doing.... watch where your fingers are.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was working on the job site and my boss told me he needed some holes drilled in some 1/2 steel plates. I had to drill several holes in each piece. They were 10-12 inches long. I had put the pieces on a milk crate and was holding the pieces down with my left foot. I thought that I had center punched all of the marked holes. Apparently that was not the case as about half way through the drill with a 1/4 bit slipped off the plate and drilled a nice 1/4 inch hole right through my right big toe.

Advice

It is always the same, learn to take your time and be sure your material is prepped properly. Always punch a starter on any metal drilling project. There was nothing there to stitch up. The doctor put a bandage on my toe and told me to take two weeks off and stay off my feet. I eventually got over it. It was not fun!

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

I'm turning foam parts on a drill mounted in on a wolcraft holder (3\$ at menards) that holds the drill horizontally. To hold the piece of foam, I am using a bolt with the head cut off, and 2 nuts put on it to clamp the form in place (with washers). I turn the part, and now I need to cut it in half (like a re-saw). The cutting tool I was using was a file, and I decided that I wanted a finer cut. So, I grap a 4' piece of wire (DUH!) and, holding it with my hands (DUH!), I place it on the spinning foam. it cuts smoothly and I am pleased with myself. I cut down, all the way through the foam, and the wire starts to wrap itself around the bolt. My first thought was 'oh my god, I'm gonna loose my fingers.' I manage to let go, but not in time to miss the lashings, and recive several nasty welts about my hands. To make matters, worse, I'm using a drill, and would have to reach across danger zone to turn it off (that is where the trigger, and the plug are located). Fortunately, I have the presence of mind to walk back to the house shut off the circuit breaker.

Advice

Well, It comes down to really thinking about what you are going to do. Also note, if you are dense like me, read everything you can about workshop safety. Then read it again. post those pictures of severed fingers and hands up in your workshop, to remind you what is at stake.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was using a drill to make a hole in the end of a lock cylinder to make a repair. Holding the smallish part with my left hand and drilling down with my right. I was using a small bit, 1/16" I think. Of course this was not good. I could not hold the part steady enough and as I put some force on the bit it snapped. The broken end of the bit penetrated a fingertip. It didn't go all the way through but enough to cause me pain for weeks while it slowly healed.

Advice

Clamp your work piece so your hands are out of the way. Use a sharp bit so you don't have to try and force it. Use a drill press if possible.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was working on a project in wood shop class. We had to create and mass produce little toy cars. I was drilling holes into little blocks that were about an inch all the way around. So I had the drill with a 1/4 inch bit in one hand and the little block in the other hand. I held the block with the thumb and index finger of my left hand. And well the drill slipped and I cut a nice gash into my thumb. I was relatively calm and kind of suprized. My thumb bled for a while and eventually stopped. I wore a band-aid for about a week and a half and a have a scar today. In hindsight it was just stupid to drill such a small piece of wood using my fingers as a vise.

Advice

The moral of the story is just don't be stupid!!! When in doubt use a vise and remember "fingers are good"! Don't do anything that would jepardize you keeping all 10 of your fingers. That means give a reasonable distance between your fingers and any sharp pointy objects that could cut them off. Also don't be afraid of the tools, but know how to safely use them, BEFORE you use them!!!

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was drilling a hole in the end of a small (4"x 1/2")strip of aluminium. For some reason I switched hands and held the drill with my left hand. The aluminium caught on the bit and got away from my right hand and spun rapidly. It hit my little finger knuckle several times before I pulled it away. It set in premature arthritis in that knuckle and required surgery to fuse it permanently as it was still hurting 9 months later.

Advice

Always use a vise or a clamp when drilling small items.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was replacing the subfloor in my kitchen, so that I could put down hardwoods. About 10 minutes into the first day, I was starting a 2 inch screw that i was guiding with my left hand. It got started then broke. The drill cane crshing down on my index finger, the phillips head bit (still spinning) entered just below the bottom knuckle and came out the flesh on the other side. Luckily it was a #3 bit so it was fairly dull. Hit the bone and rolled off. Nice hole, probably could have used a couple of stitches, but has since healed up nicely.

Advice

Use a magnetic screw guide!!!!

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was hanging some heavy shop cabinets by myself (bad idea). Long story short, I was balancing the cabinets on a 2X4 board while attempting to screw the cabinet into the studs. My pilot hole was not large enough so I tried to muscle the screw into the stud. Naturally, the phillips bit jumped off the screw and into the my thumb near the nail. Nothing life threatening, but a stupid injury.

Advice

Drill proper pilot holes, don't force the screw, and use a magnetic guide if possible.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

This was a really stupid injury... almost did not want to submit it but read all the reports and realized all of us can get stupid now and again. I had my 5 and 8 year old little girls in the shop and did not yet have a drill press. I was making them 2x4 cars and was cutting fender holes out of the 2x4 block with a spade bit. The pin centering the bit tore our the bottom of the car and one of the paddles kicked back the car... the bit then jumped and ons of the spades sliced across the back of my thumb on my hold down hand... sliced nearly to the bone and took about 10 stitches to close... could have been much worse. My little girls were standing there wide eyed so I had to remain pretty calm so as not to freak them out too much. It was a great way to make sure they stay away from daddys tools.

Advice

Use the right tool for the job... I did not yet have a drill press but just clamping down the peice I was working on would have made a huge difference here. Also... a spade bit should not have been used in this situation.

Tool Type

Drill

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

Kind of stupid mistake I never thought I would do. I hurt middle finger while drilling a hole for a hinge. I was holding the cabinet wall and the hinge together with my thumb and left the middle finger on the other side on the path of the bit. The bit wasn't supposed to go thorough the wood, but with the pressure I was putting on it, it perforated the wood very fast, going all the way through the tip of my finger. Fortunately, it just drilled the flesh on the tip and didn't hit the nails or the bone, but it wasn't nice to see pieces of my flesh spinning on the bit and it hurt like hell.

Advice

Never leave your hand or fingers on the way of a drill. Even if you are just drilling a hole that is not supposed to go all the way through the wood.