

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

The tool was one of those cheap, flat razor blade holders often used for opening packages and boxes. The razor blade fits into a flat holder, and a sleeve fits around that assembly. Slide the sleeve back to reveal the blade, and slide it completely forward off the holder to change the blade. As I was changing the blade one day, I accidentally cut myself pretty deeply in the wrist. The cut was parallel to the veins in my wrist, just like when someone is trying to kill themselves. I stopped the bleeding, and was fine, but there was a lot of blood. Looking back, I realize I did two things wrong. First, I was using a tool that wasn't working that well. It was old and dirty, and the sleeve required too much force to move. I figured it was no big deal because it was only a razor blade holder, and if I kept putting new blades into it, it would still work fine. I was wrong. Second, I was holding the knife in my left hand with the blade facing my right hand. I didn't know this, because the blade was covered by the sleeve. When I slid the sleeve forward, with my right hand, it didn't move at first, I pushed harder and it released all at once. The sleeve came off, and my wrist slid right along the blade. Before I knew what happened I was bleeding.

Advice

1) Don't use this kind of knife. 2)If you do use one, always examine the location of the blade before removing the sleeve. 3)Throw the knife away if it gets too gummed up with packing tape or corrosion.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

I was cutting up a sheet of cardboard with a utility knife, so that it would fit into the trash can. I was holding the cardboard high in the air in my left hand while drawing the knife down through it with my right. When the knife finished the cut, I was still pulling down pretty hard, and the knife flashed downward and across what would have been my lap if I had been sitting down. When I looked down and saw my jeans sliced right through, I fully expected to see blood gushing from my femoral artery and-or severed penis. Close call: the blade cut through my jeans AND my underwear, but not even a nick on the skin.

Advice

1. Hideous accidents can result from the most mundane activities. It's not only table saws that can maim and kill. 2. Never extend a blade further than you need. Had that utility knife blade been fully extended, I'd probably have done a Lorena Bobbitt on myself and-or bled to death from a severed femoral artery. 3. You are NEVER SAFE when using sharp tools!

Tool Type

Experience

Injury Severity

Description

I was on the barn roof and cutting roofing, when I sliced my calf wide open. I had many stitches and went to work. The next week I'd gotten infection in it and was put in the hospital to save my leg. It was very painfull, but I still have my leg.

Advice

Always cut away from yourself.

Tool Type

Experience

Injury Severity

Description

I was working on drywall in my home. I had been using the razor knife to cut masking around wall outlets. I was sitting on the floor working, put the knife down, and got up. My foot went sideways into the knife laying on the floor. The knife went in at a 90 degree angle just in front of my Achilles tendon. Fortunately it was a very clean cut, and only required some pressure to stop the bleeding.

Advice

Always wear shoes when working with a knife, and if you have to put a knife on the floor, put the safety switch to the safe position before standing up. If you cut yourself with a razor knife, assess the situation and act quickly, Cuts can be deep and bleeding can be profuse.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I had just finished installing a door in our house and was ready to install the trim. First though, I had to trim off the shims. With a razor knife in my right hand, I begin cutting the upper shims, bringing them flush with the door frame. My left hand was positioned on the frame, a couple of feet below the shim, for support. (I was really bearing down on the knife.) Before I realized what had happened, the shim gave way and the knife continued its' downward travel, slicing through the first joint of my middle finger, on my left hand. My wife, who's is a registered nurse, took one look at it and informed me that we were going to the hospital. I didn't agrue! After suturing it back together and putting the finger in a splint they sent me home. It healed fine, but after a year, I still don't have normal feeling in my finger tip.

Advice

Always make sure the hand that isn't doing the cutting is above the knife. This applies whether you're cutting against a straight edge, or doing somethig like I was doing. If (when) the knife slips, you want to make sure that no part of your body is in its' potential path. Also, make sure you're alert and not tired. When my accident happened, it was after a long day and I was exhausted. I just wanted to get the job done, so I could go to bed. I wasn't paying any attention to saftey.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was using one of the popular old razor knives, the kind with the two halves held together with a machine screw and has a retractable blade with spares inside the handle. I was pressing down pretty hard to cut something and the blade slipped up through the two halves of the handle, the back of the blade is still pretty sharp even though it's not a cutting edge. The blade produced a pretty deep nasty cut in one finger. I believe the screw was tight but wear and age could have left the two halves of the handle slightly spread enough the blade was able to force its way between them.

Advice

Don't buy or use what appears to be the older style handles, the new ones have an interlocking zig-zag shape at the top of the blade end so the blade CANNOT slip up between the two halves into your hand.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was attempting to cut a plastic child safety cap (the kind you have to squeeze incredibly hard to turn off the lid it covers) off of a can of paint thinner I was using. I had the blade of the razor knife out to just its first notch so I wouldn't break off the tip while prying on the lid. I was being careful (or so I thought) by cutting away from my body and my left hand. Suddenly the razor blade slipped from the cap, and with all the force I was bearing down, promptly buried itself in my left thigh, just above the knee. Thank goodness I had the blade only partially exposed. A good cleaning and a band aid were all that was needed, other than suffer the "stupid clutz" jokes my wife heaped on me afterward.

Advice

Safety devices are there for a reason. Don't attempt to bypass them. Think carefully what any "potential" paths the tool you are using could inadvertently take without warning or through careless use.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was replacing a rear main seal in an old Chevy inline six when I realized that I didn't have a tool needed to install the new seal. Being the thrifty and impatient person that I am as well as a woodworker I figured I could make my own by carving it out of a dowel. Not thinking about what step two would involve I cut the dowel to a 6" length on the tablesaw. When it came time to carve I had too little a length to keep the dowel under control while carving. Even though the knife was equipped with a fresh blade and was cutting the dowel like butter, I must have tried to take too much wood with a cut and the blade stopped halfway through so I forced it the rest of the way. I lost my grip on the dowel as the blade cleared the wood and it sliced my left index finger from the first joint to the nail. As the blood poured I became angry at myself for not taking the proper precautions. I was at work with my father and he was pleading to take me to the ER to get it stitched up, but I was too proud for that. I drove myself with a bloodsoaked hand wrapped in a rag to the pharmacy. I bought a box of butterfly strips, some gauze, and some tape to fix myself up. Several years later I have a small scar and about 75% of the feeling back in that finger.

Advice

When carving or cutting with a knife always secure the work with something other than your hand. A bench vise (which I had) takes more abuse from a blade than your body. If you can't secure the work, keep yourself away from the path of the blade. Try to predict the blade's path in case of a mishap and keep yourself away.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

While scoring drywall I decided to replace blades about twice a day. Once in the morning then again at noon. This, with the correct amount of force while scoring, gave me perfect edges everytime. At one point it became so easy I decided that I no longer needed to wear gloves nor pay attention. While scoring a long peice of drywall my phone rang and got my attention. Immediately I must have jerked my hand and the blade jumped my T sqare and went right on the long side of my thumb slicing me from knuckle across fingernail. The bleeding could not be stopped and wound up having to wrap a rubberband around the bottom of my thumb to stop ciculation. To make a long story short - I nearly lost the tip of my thumb. Remember, I had new blades and was applying quite a bit of force.

Advice

When cutting drywall, and any other material for that matter, always wear thick gloves that can take a sharp swipe. Now I have a scar and tight skin on my left thumb that serves as a constant reminder to think safety first!

Tool Type

Experience

Injury Severity

Description

While carving some pecan wood I decided to make a few cuts by pulling the blade toward me while holding the piece with my left hand. I was being impatient and was trying to make the deepest cuts possible by applying a lot of force. The blade slipped from the wood and by the time I could react, I had already buried the entire blade in my left forearm. I was extremely lucky that the cut was clean and there was no permanent damage other than a 2" scar.

Advice

Never make cut towards your limbs and body. Secure the work piece with something other than your hands.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

While making a dog toy from heavy braided line, I needed three hands, and decided to use my bench vise to hold a utility knife. The handle was in the jaws, and the sharp side of the blade was pointed up. The vise was rotated so that the knife was suspended over the floor with the sharp side up. I then carefully rubbed the line on the knife to cut it. This worked out just fine, except that I became distracted and forgot that it was there. Some time later, I turned quickly to grab a tool and WHAM slammed my elbow into the point of the utility blade just about as hard as I could. It made a nice, wooden sound, like the first blow of a hammer on a brad nail in a 2x4. I pulled my elbow off of the knife, more alarmed than in pain, and noted that the point of the blade was now missing. A droll mystery now occupied me: was the point embedded in the end of my elbow, or lying somewhere on the shop floor? Of course it was pointless to search for such a small object that might have broken off weeks ago. So, I looked for it with X-rays. Lucky me: wherever it is, I'm not toting it around inside my bone. But I did cut straight through to the bone, and it hurts "plenty good". My arm will be in a sling for a few days. Because the sling is obvious and everyone is curious as to how I hurt myself, I now get to repeatedly explain to many, many people just how stupid I was. This is called "re-enforcement" and is part of something called "learning". Luckily, I got off easy - I'll be fine soon and still have ten fingers.

Advice

Try to hold the workpiece, not the tool, in the vise. If it is necessary to hold the tool in the vise, rotate it over the table so that it is out of the way. If this is not possible, put the pointed-sharp end downward. AND LISTEN TO THAT LITTLE VOICE. I knew that what I was doing was dangerous, but I was careless. I should have known better.

Tool Type

Experience

Injury Severity

Description

Mortising a hinge to a laminate door, having attached the hinge with screws i was scribing the outline to be routed. i just changed the blade after realizing the old one was getting dull..the last pass... a momentary lapse of concentration..12 stiches and 2 severed tendons...and a whole new repect for the simplest of tools...

Advice

Turn the radio off...be aware that the tool is sharp...look where it will go if it slips faster than you expect it to...cut away from your body parts...

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

This happened to a guy I was training at the warehouse food store with a box cutter, the flat, single edge razor blade holders. I had been doing the job for at least a year while in school, so was pretty fast opening the boxes (150-200 boxes-hour.) I told the new guy not to try to keep up with me, just do it at his own speed. He was a macho kinda guy, "anything you can do, I can do better" type, and tried to imitate my method. I kept my left hand on the far side of the box, out of the line of fire, cut toward my right leg, and used the wrist-forearm of my knife hand to stop the stroke against my right thigh when the blade left the box, while the left hand spun the box to put the next side in position. The angle I held the box cutter at always kept the blade away from my thigh. (I never cut myself in the 30 months on the job.)

Of course he tried to do it like me, but didn't quite get the part about using your wrist to stop the stroke by hitting your thigh, he tried to go past his leg. His hand cleared his leg, but the cutter did not. Approximately 6 inch gash across his middle thigh, probably 3/4 to 1" deep in the middle. I kept a towel in my back pocket to wipe my forehead and/or spills, it was clean, so applied direct pressure while screaming for someone to call 911. We called the ambulance for him, and I ended up cleaning up the mess he left on the floor, blood and vomit. He never did come back.

Advice

When using any kind of tool, figure out where the tool will go if it slips, or when the stroke through the work is completed and the tool has no resistance. If you keep the tool pointed away from all parts of yourself, you're much less likely to stick it in yourself. Don't try to do it as fast as someone else can. Start slow, and the job will get done without the pain-mess-embarrassment of an injury.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was using a knife to cut in small hinges for a jewelry box and pulled it towards me but the box was moving a little so i put my hand on the box side and the knife slipped. 12 stitches in my thumb.

Advice

Fix your work down to a solid bench, keep both hands behind the blade. This is something i tell my students every day!

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

This isn't woodworking but since many of us do our own electrical in the shop, it might help others avoid the same mishap. I was stripping the insulation off some 10/2 Romex while wiring the new shop. This was for the hookup in the service panel and I needed to strip off about 3'.

I was holding the end of the wire with my left hand and scoring the outer casing with the razor knife in my right hand. For some reason I lost my concentration and the knife slipped off the wire slicing a flap of skin off my left ring finger knuckle. It took seven stitches and \$300 at the local Emergency Room, and I was back to work that afternoon.

Advice

First of all, I had the knife fully extended from the handle. To properly score the insulation, the razor only needed to stick out 1/16" or less. Second, I should've been holding the end of the wire with pliers instead of my hand. Third, I was in a hurry to get the shop up and running since work was backing up.

My advice is take it easy, do it right and in the end it will save you time, money, pain and lots of embarrassment.

Tool Type

Razor Knife

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

Attempting to remove an old window sill quickly. Brand new blade in razor knife. Was starting to score the bead of caulk underneath the sill and the blade would catch on the rough edge of the drywall covered by the caulk. To get more leverage, I slid my left hand into the area where I was drawing the knife, instead of keeping my hand above and away from the knife. I got more leverage, but the blade hit a bump and jumped and I sliced my left thumb from just above the connection to the hand down 1 and 3/4 inches. 19 stitches. Very, very, very fortunate that the wound was parallel to my thumb and not across.

Advice

Follow the basic rules of safety, keep hands out of any potential path of the knife/blade stroke. Do not rush what you are doing. I completely knew better than to put my hand where I did.

Tool Type

Experience

Injury Severity

Description

I was cutting out a section of carpet using a framing square as a straight-edge. One cut was too long so I grabbed an aluminum yardstick and used it instead. It was about half as wide and somewhat unsteady on the carpet/padding surface..... During the cut my knife slipped over the edge and sliced off the corner of my thumb.

Advice

Make sure you use a WIDE straightedge, and keep your fingers away from the path of the blade. My thumb hurt like hell for a month.

Tool Type

Experience

Injury Severity

Description

I was wiring my shop during the late part of construction. I was using a razor knife to strip the Romex: left hand under the wire and right hand holding the knife. The knife slipped, slicing the third finger almost to the bone. I was alone and far from a hospital, so I duct taped the wound tightly. I have a noticeable scar and the end of the finger has no feeling anymore. Could have been worse, i guess.

Advice

Keep your fingers out of the way of the blade and pay careful attention to what you are trying to do.