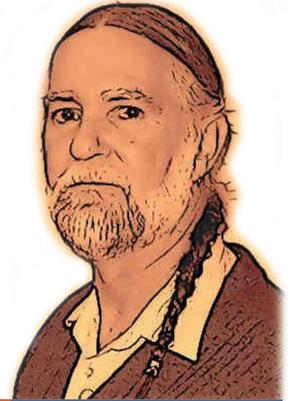


**SAFETY  
TIP  
No.2**

# Dave Dahr on Safety



## Working With Ladders

**HELPING  
HOMEOWNERS**

HOMEOWNERS INVARIABLY make frequent use of ladders to do household chores or undertake larger renovation projects. Falling from a ladder inside or outside almost always results in very serious injuries if not death. Indeed, improper use of a ladder is one of the leading causes of injuries around the home. Here are some things you, or those you hire, need to know about working with and on ladders in and around your home.

### Types of Ladders

To start with you must use the right ladder for the job. If you do not have the right one, buy one, borrow or rent one – do not improvise. There are four types of ladders: straight ladders, extension ladders, step ladders and combination ladders.

**Combination ladders** are ladders which can convert from a step ladder to an extension ladder.

You use a **straight ladder** when you have a solid base for the foot and a solid wall or edge to lean the top against. You use an **extension ladder** in the same situation only higher. You use a **step ladder** when you have a solid and level base and no wall or secure edge at the height you want to reach.



**extension ladder**

### Placing a Ladder Against a Wall

Inspect the ladder before and after use. Long ladders take more than one person to place them against the wall. For every four rungs of ladder, the base or foot of the ladder must be one foot away from the wall. In other words, for every four feet of ladder, it should be one foot away from the wall, e.g. eight-foot ladder must be two feet away from the wall.

### Placing a Ladder Against a Ridge

Always have three rungs of the ladder above its resting point. When possible, tie the top of the ladder off to prevent it from moving left or right. Ladders at great heights should also be secured at the base or have another person hold it in position with both hands and the instep of their feet against the bottom rails.

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## Using a Step Ladder

Use a step ladder when you have a flat and solid floor and you do not have a surface you can or want to lean against. Most of the rules for straight ladders apply to step ladders. Extend the legs of the step ladder to their maximum and lock both braces. Ensure that all four rails are resting firmly on the surface it is placed on. A step ladder over ten feet should have another person holding it in place to maintain its balance.



step ladder

## Ladder Do's and Don'ts

There are lots of do's and don'ts of ladder safety, all of which will seem obvious.

1. Secure the top and bottom of the ladder when you use it to access a platform or scaffolding.
2. Always maintain a three point contact on your ladder, e.g. two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand.
3. Wear proper footwear with non-slip soles.
4. Never over reach, that is, extend the centre of your body's torso past the side rail of the ladder.
5. Always face your ladder when ascending and descending it.
6. Never have more than one person at a time on a ladder.
7. Never stand on the top of a step ladder.
8. Never stand on the top three rungs of a straight or extension ladder.
9. Keep metal and wooden ladders away from electrical cables and lines.
10. Ensure that the extension ladder rope is tied properly.
11. Do not carry tools in your hand up a ladder – use a tool belt.

12. Do not use the rung of a straight or extension ladder as a resting place at the top, e.g. the point of contact on the corner of a building.
13. Never use a ladder in a high wind.
14. Never leave a ladder unattended in a high traffic area.
15. Never use a ladder to support a platform or plank.
16. Never use a ladder from a staging or scaffolding deck.
17. Don't use a ladder on a roof to go up and down the surface of the roof.

## Inspecting Your Ladder

1. Ensure your rungs are secure.
2. Check that braces and rungs are in good condition.
3. Wood parts should be smooth with no splinters or cracks.
4. Hinge spreaders and tops should be tight and straight.
5. Extension locks and pulleys should be tight and working properly.
6. Check that the extension rope is not damaged.
7. Maintain your ladder in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

**No one ever plans on being injured,  
but you can plan on how not to have an accident.  
Identify the hazard and take control.**