

Ladder Safety

The number of ladder-related injuries in the United States increased by more than 50 percent from 1990 to 2005, says a study in the May issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. More than 2.1 million people were treated in hospital emergency departments for ladder-related injuries from 1990 to 2005. That averages out to more than 136,000 cases a year. We all use ladders and step stools on occasion to get to elevated objects inside and outside our homes and work. Injuries caused by using ladders and step stools are way too common and can result in serious injury or death. Falls are the number one cause of injuries attributed to ladders, so use the right ladder the correct way and don't take any risks. Here are just a few useful tips to prevent a ladder related injury and possibly a life changing injury.

- Inspect the ladder for damage or defects before each use
- Keep ladder rungs free of oil, grease, mud, or other slippery substances
- Use a ladder that is the proper length for the job
- Keep your body close to the ladder and centered between the rails at all times
- Avoid excessive leaning and overreaching reposition the ladder as required
- Use the three-points-of-contact rule when ascending and descending
- Do not stand above the second step from the top of a stepladder or fourth rung from the top of an extension ladder
- Keep ladders away from power lines and energized electrical equipment
- Never use a stepladder as a straight ladder – unfold it and lock both spreaders
- Straight or extension ladders should extend three steps beyond the landing – be sure to secure the top and bottom to prevent it from tipping.
- Extension ladders should be set up at a 75° angle. Follow the “4 to 1” rule: One foot back (from the point where the ladder makes contact) for each four feet up.
- Haul materials with a rope or line rather than carry them up an ladder
- Ladders should only be set up on a firm, level surface
- Have someone hold the ladder to provide extra stability
- Read all the safety labels on the ladder before use

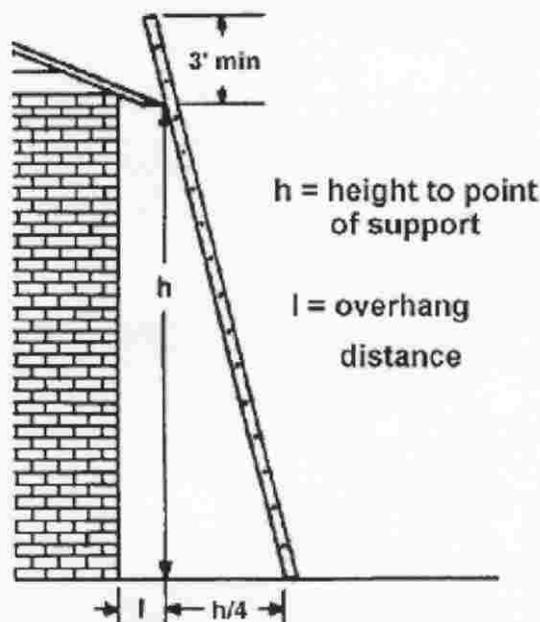


Figure 2. The base of a straight ladder should be one foot out of every four of height to the point of support.