

USING LADDERS SAFELY

PLACE the base of the ladder on a firm, level, and dry surface. If there's a time when this isn't possible - working on grass, for instance - tie the feet of the ladder to stakes in the ground to stop it slipping, and place a large flat wooden board underneath to help prevent it sinking.

DON'T put a ladder on top of boxes, bricks, barrels or any other unstable surface just to gain extra height.

POSITION the ladder so that the base won't slip outwards. Leaning ladders are designed so that their safest angle of use comes when every 1 measure out from the wall is matched by 4 measures up it (rungs are usually about a third of a metre apart, so its easy enough to get the distances roughly right).

Remember the rule: 'ONE OUT FOR FOUR UP'

The more the base is moved out from this position, the greater the risk that it will slip outwards suddenly and fall down without warning!

DO secure the bottom and the upper part of the ladder, by tying them (from stiles, not rungs) with rope or straps onto a stable, fixed object. You can tie the base to stakes in the ground, or use fixed blocks or sandbags to help guard against the ladder slipping, or buy special stabilisers. A rope or strap tied from a stile onto a fixed object at about the height of the fifth rung from bottom will help to stop any further movement.

If it's impossible for some reason to secure the ladder, get another adult to 'foot' it (by standing with one foot on the bottom rung and holding a stile in each hand).

DO rest the top of the ladder against a solid surface, never against guttering, or other narrow or plastic features. Where a surface is too brittle or weak to support the top of the ladder, use a stay or a stand-off resting on a firm surface nearby. Bolt or clip this to the top of the ladder before putting up the ladder.

DO have at least three rungs extending beyond a roof's edge if you're using a ladder to get yourself up onto the roof.

DO make sure that longer extension ladders (over 18 rungs) have an overlap of at least three rungs. Shorter ones (up to 18 rungs) need a minimum overlap of two.

DO keep your body facing the ladder at all times, centred between the stiles.

DON'T reach too far forwards or sideways, or stand with one foot on the ladder and the other on something else.

Move the ladder to avoid overstretching, and re-secure it whenever necessary, however frustrating that might be!

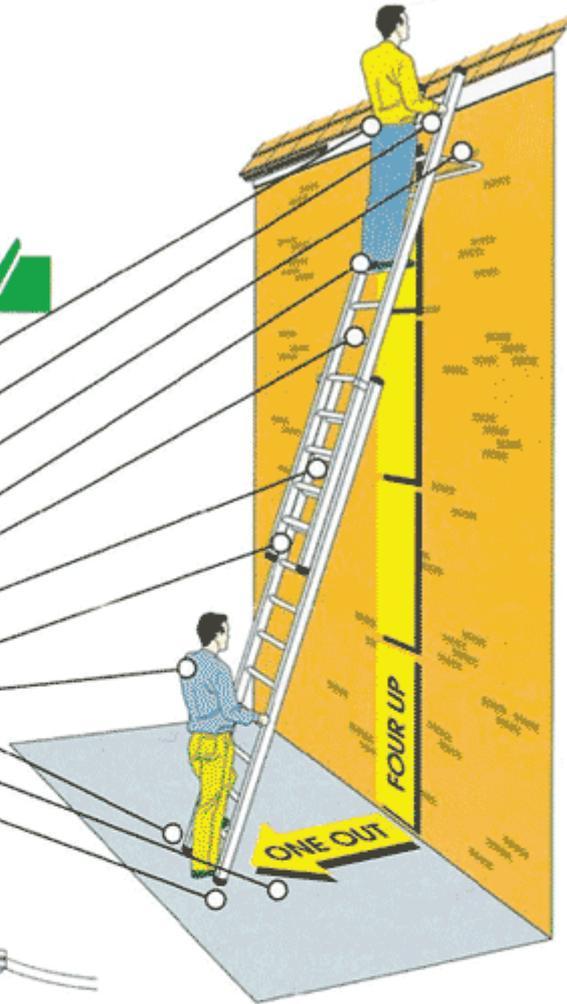
DO try to keep both hands free to hold the ladder as much as possible while you're climbing or descending - if you need to carry any tools, use a shoulder bag, belt holster or belt hooks.

DON'T carry heavy items or long lengths of material up a ladder.

DO hold on to the ladder with one hand while you work. You can get special trays which fit between the stiles to take paint pots, tools etc.

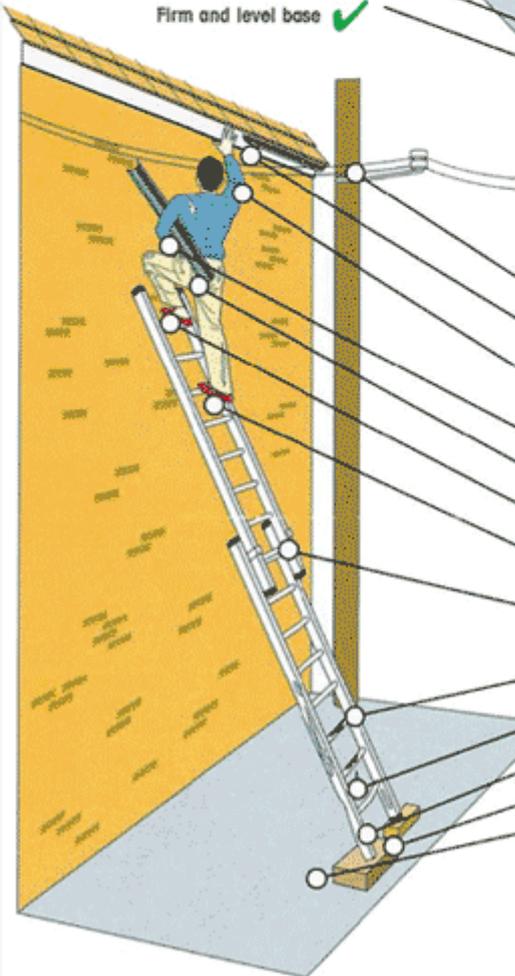
THE RIGHT WAY

- Right height for the job – no overreaching ✓
- Good grip ✓
- Stand-off used, ladder not resting on guttering ✓
- Fiat shoes ✓
- Clean steps ✓
- Ladders overlap by at least three rungs ✓
- Ladder undamaged ✓
- Adult at foot of ladder ✓
- Two non-slip feet ✓
- Ladder at correct angle ✓
- Firm and level base ✓



THE WRONG WAY

- ✗ Electrical hazard
- ✗ Overhead hazard
- ✗ Wrong height for the job – overreaching
- ✗ No grip on ladder
- ✗ Long length of material
- ✗ Standing on top three rungs
- ✗ Slippers
- ✗ Ladder overlaps by one rung
- ✗ Slippery steps
- ✗ Damaged stile and rung
- ✗ Non-slip foot missing
- ✗ Unstable surface
- ✗ Base too far from wall



LADDER SAFETY

DO NOT BE TEMPTED TO USE A LADDER IF YOU'RE NOT FIT ENOUGH, OR SUFFER FROM GIDDINESS OR AREN'T CONFIDENT WITH HEIGHTS.

DO NOT USE A LADDER IN STRONG WIND OR WET CONDITIONS.

DO NOT USE A LADDER NEAR ANY POWER LINES.

DO WEAR STRONG, FLAT SHOES OR BOOTS, WITH DRY SOLES AND A GOOD GRIP.

DON'T WEAR SANDALS, SLIP-ONS OR HAVE BARE FEET ON A LADDER.

IF USING THE LADDER IN FRONT OF A DOOR it should be locked, blocked or guarded by someone whilst you're up the ladder.

THE OVERALL LENGTH OF A LADDER is not the same as its usable length: allow one metre of ladder length above the highest rung you use. Never stand on the top three rungs.

Remember also that the "Extended Height" of a ladder is measured along the stiles. This will be reduced when the ladder is placed at the correct working angle against a wall (see below). However, do not over-compensate for this - a ladder with an Extended Height of 9.0m / 30ft will only lose about 30cm / 1ft when positioned at the correct working angle.

BE SECURE

For security reasons don't store a ladder on view outdoors where it could be stolen or used in a break-in.