

Using Knives, Box Cutters, and Other Slicers

We use knives and other sharp blades nearly every day, both at work and at home. If they're not used correctly, they can cause painful injuries. Serious cuts, punctures, or lacerations can even damage ligaments and tendons. These injuries frequently come from the handling, cleaning, and maintenance of knives and slicing equipment.

It's easy to choose, hold, and use a cutting tool properly to protect against injury.



Key Practices

- ✓ Always push the blade away from yourself. Make sure no other parts of your body are in the way, including fingers, arms, and legs.
- ✓ Do not place knives near the edge of a countertop or working surface.
- ✓ Don't take a shortcut and use the wrong blade for a job just because it's close at hand.
- ✓ Don't use blades if they are dull or have defects. Keep knives sharp and let others know when they are sharpened.
- ✓ Hold a tool as it is designed to be held and concentrate on the movement until a cut is finished. If interrupted, stop cutting, and set the tool down in a safe place.
- ✓ Let a falling knife fall. Step back, warn others, and do not try to catch it.
- ✓ Make sure the object being cut is held securely and away from body parts.
- ✓ Never leave a knife soaking in water. Wash knives separately from other utensils.
- ✓ Never toss a cutting tool to another person, even if you believe that the blade is closed or fully retracted. Also, never attempt to catch a tool that is being thrown.
- ✓ Put knives away properly in racks or sheaths.
- ✓ Some objects are too thick for certain cutters and require too much force to make a cut. Using a blade that doesn't cut appropriately can break a blade or suddenly redirect it in a dangerous direction.
- ✓ Store cutting tools properly with blades retracted or folded closed to help keep them sharp.
- ✓ Unplug electric slicers before attempting cleaning or maintenance.
- ✓ Use the tampers and pushers that come with large blades like food slicers.
- ✓ Wear appropriate gloves and other protective equipment. If you use blades regularly, consider using cut-resistant gloves.
- ✓ When giving a knife to another person, set it down on a clean stable surface. Let that person pick it up.

Check out our [Safety Tips page](#) for more safety information.

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