

Climbing Ladders – Three Points of Contact

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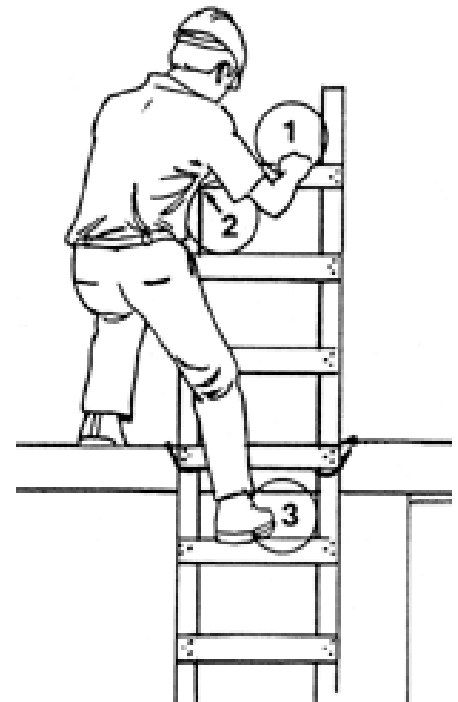
Today we're going to talk about climbing up and down ladders. It's not as easy as it sounds. Many ladder accidents occur when people are climbing, or getting on and off the ladder.

To use ladders safely, always maintain *three points of contact*. This technique works for all types of ladders; extension or straight ladders, step ladders, and fixed ladders.

Three points of contact help prevent injuries from slips and falls when climbing ladders.

[Having a ladder available to demonstrate the points below is advised]

- Inspect the ladder for mud, snow, and other slippery substances. Also, clean material off your boots before climbing.
- Face the ladder when climbing up or down the ladder.
- Place both hands firmly on the side rails before stepping onto a ladder. Extend your arms. This keeps your body away from the ladder so your knees can bend freely as you climb.
- Use 3-point contact climbing a ladder: one hand and two feet or two hands and one foot on the ladder at all times. Alternatively, slide hands along rails rather than moving rung-to-rung.
- Keep your body between the side rails. Don't lean out on either side.
- Do not carry tools, equipment, or material in your hands while climbing. Use a hoist line or gin wheel for lifting and lowering.



Remember these points when getting on or off the top of an extension ladder

- Make sure that ladders extend at least (3 feet) above their bearing point at a floor or landing. Test the ladder to make sure it is firmly supported. The ladder should be secured at the top and bottom for extended operations.
- With one hand, grasp the ladder at a convenient location at about shoulder height. Keep your weight on the foot that will be on the surface as you place the other foot on the center of a rung at roof level or slightly above. Slowly transfer your weight straight down onto the foot that is on the rung, making sure not to push the ladder sideways. Then move the other foot and hand onto the ladder.
- To get off the ladder at the top, onto for example the roof, climb to the rung just past the level of the roof. With your weight on one foot, step down onto the roof with the other foot. Slowly transfer your weight to the foot on the roof without pushing the ladder sideways.