



Physical Therapy and Hand Center, L.L.C.

# Lawn Mower Injury Prevention

In 2010 the number of lawnmower injuries treated in U.S. emergency rooms numbered at 253,000. Nearly 17,000 of those were children under the age of 19. The energy transfer of a lawnmower blade is equivalent to being shot at close range with a 357 magnum pistol. No wonder that the blades moving at this speed can cause serious injury including broken bones, deep cuts, damage to arteries, nerves, and tendons as well as possible amputation of fingers and toes. It is also interesting to note that a lawnmower can eject debris at speeds up to 100 miles per hour, which can result in serious injury as well. In addition, the injuries sustained are frequently contaminated by dirt or fertilizer making the risk for infection very high. Despite these statistics, most people overlook appropriate safety precautions when mowing the lawn.

The following are 12 safety tips to follow when using your lawnmower:

1. Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions before your mower's 1<sup>st</sup> use.
2. Do not remove safety devices, shields, or guards from your mower.
3. Never start you mower in the garage or shed to minimize risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
4. Before starting you mower make sure there are no loose parts. If there is any sign of leaking fuel, DO NOT use it until it is fixed.
  - o Many lawnmowers are being recalled due to such leaks.
5. Make sure the motor is completely off before inspecting or repairing lawn mower equipment.
6. Do not use your hands to remove clogged grass and debris from your mower:
  - o Once the debris is cleared the blade can quickly swing around and cause serious injury.
  - o Use a stick or broom handle to clear away any debris.
7. Wear sturdy closed toed shoes or boots for good traction.
8. Check the lawn for debris such as roots, sticks, toys and rocks that could potentially become dangerous projectiles if you run them over.
9. You shouldn't allow children under the age of 16 to use a ride on mower, or children under 12 to use a push mower.
10. For push mowers you should mow perpendicular to any slope, and riding mowers should drive up and down slopes. DO NOT pull the mower toward you or mow wet grass at it may result in falls and likely injury.
11. Make sure your self propelled mower stops if the handle is released.
12. NEVER refuel a hot engine.

\* Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions \*

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