

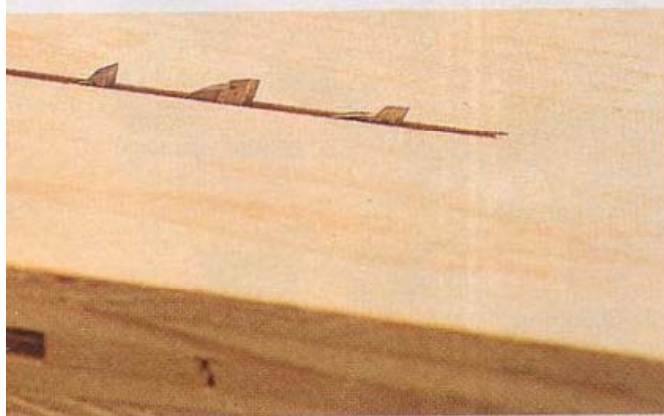
Practice common (and uncommon) sense

17 *Keep it clean.* Before making any cut, clear the tabletop of all scrap wood, tools, fasteners, and other debris. (That includes not using the top of your fence as a tool tray.) These objects not only distract but they also can become missiles.

18 *Protect your eyes.* Without face-hugging safety glasses, airborne dust and chips can blur your vision (not good in the middle of a cut), or worse, injure your eyes permanently. A decent pair of safety glasses costs less than a visit to the ER, so buy a pair and wear them.

19 *Set the right height.* There are lots of ideas floating around about proper blade height, but Freud's Jim Brewer has the final word, advising that about half the highest tooth should protrude above the workpiece, as shown *below*. Brewer emphasizes that the bottom of the tooth should never be higher than the workpiece top.

20 *Be alert!* The tablesaw-injury story often begins with, "I was making the last cut of the day..." Fatigue leads to errors in judgment that, in turn, lead to miscut workpieces—or worse. Also, repetitive cutting chores can lull you into carelessness, so take frequent breaks.



21 *Don't overreach.* Any time your hands get within 6" or so of the blade, you should hear alarm bells in your head. Keep pushsticks handy and use one to complete the cut whenever your digits get within the danger zone.

22 *Always use the fence or miter gauge, but never both.* Two cuts you should never consider: freehand cutting (with no assistance from the rip fence or miter gauge); and using *both* the fence and miter gauge to guide a workpiece. In both cases, the workpiece will likely bind on the blade, sending it flying back at you.

23 *Employ a feathered friend.* The fingers of a feather board handily hold a workpiece snug against the fence so you can concentrate on feeding it at a steady pace. Mount the feather board so that the fingers end before the cutting starts, as shown *below*, to prevent trapping the offcut and launching it across the shop. ♣

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