



How to Handle Kickback in a Circular Saw

Kickback is a fact of life for anybody who uses a circular saw often. It is caused by the timber that is being cut, bending in some way, so that it jams on the back of the blade, making the saw buck or stall.

Steps

1 Understand what causes kickback. Once you know what causes kickback, you are halfway to preventing it. When all is going well, the action of the teeth cutting into the timber ("A" in the image) helps to keep the saw bed and the timber in close contact. If the timber starts pinching the blade (at "B"), the opposite happens: The saw wants to climb out of the timber, sometimes with a vicious jerk. The easy answer is to not let the timber bind on the back of the blade.

2 Choose where to cut appropriately. In the following sketch you see a length of 150 x 50 on a couple of saw stools. Where would you cut with the circular saw? Point A, B, or C?

- You can saw straight through it at point B, holding the main length of timber with your left hand, and letting the off-cut fall to the ground. But, there will probably be a big rough split on the end because you needed another hand to support the off-cut (if you are right handed).
- If you cut through at point A, holding one piece with your left hand and letting the other drop to the ground, but it'll splinter again. It is fairly safe, but you have another thing to consider. Look at the sketch below. The two ends on the stools want to stay put, but when you are pushing in the middle, and as soon as the bit of timber remaining to cut becomes small enough, the whole lot wants to bend, and sure enough, bind on the back of the blade.
- A better way to do it would be to cut at point C, where, as you are getting almost through the cut, you can support the off-cut with your left hand in such a way that you help the cut to open up.

3 Clamp down the timber if it wants to slide about on the stools.

4 Make a bench if you are cutting many pieces up. There are several ways to do this.

- Use some of the smaller pieces to make a bench. Then with a few lumps of off-cuts under the piece being cut you can cut safely.
- Make a bench out of a couple of planks.
- Cut on the ground, using packers and one foot on the timber being cut.

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Tips

- If you are cutting off rafter ends to fix a fascia, you should either have them pre-cut to size before you fix them, or close to it, so that the offcuts are small enough to be no problem. That way you have one hand to hang on with and one to cut with.

Sources and Citations

- <http://www.builderbill-diy-help.com/> - Original source, shared with permission.

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