

# Ladder Safety Checklist

Cleaning gutters? Your ladder angle matters.

Educational only, not medical advice.



According to NIOSH, in **about 40% of ladder injury cases**, the cause is the **ladder sliding out at the base** from an incorrect setup angle. Set extension ladders at **about 75 degrees**.<sup>1</sup>

## SET THE ANGLE, THEN CLIMB

### Before and during the climb

- ☐ **Set the angle: about 75 degrees.** An incorrect setup angle can let the base slide out.<sup>1</sup>
- ☐ **Use the 4 to 1 rule.** For every 4 feet of height, move the base 1 foot from the wall.<sup>2</sup>
- ☐ **Keep three points of contact.** Keep both hands free for climbing. Carry tools in a tool belt or bag.<sup>2,3</sup>
- ☐ **Extend at least three feet above the edge.** Your extension ladder should reach at least three feet above the roof or structure edge.<sup>3</sup>
- ☐ **Get the free NIOSH Ladder Safety app.** It has an angle measuring tool with visual and audible signals.<sup>1,2</sup>

### After a fall: when to get checked

*Dr. Jocko's ER guidance:*

**Can't move, or neck or back pain, numbness, or weakness after a fall?** Call 911 and stay still.

MedlinePlus says do not move the person unless there is urgent danger.<sup>5</sup>

**Hit your head and passed out, are confused, are vomiting, or have a headache that gets worse?** Go to the ER now.

**Can't bear weight?** Get checked today.

**Older adult on a blood thinner?** CDC says get seen right away after a bump or blow to the head, even without symptoms.<sup>4</sup>

That's when I want you to get checked.

### Sources

1. CDC/NIOSH, Ladder Safety (Jan 23, 2024): [cdc.gov/niosh/falls/ladder/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/falls/ladder/index.html)
2. NIOSH Science Blog, Ladder Safety (June 28, 2017): [cdc.gov/niosh/bulletin/2017/ladder-safety-wrt.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/bulletin/2017/ladder-safety-wrt.html)
3. NIOSH feature, Ladder Safety (archived, last reviewed Mar 1, 2024): [archive.cdc.gov/www\\_cdc\\_gov/niosh/newsroom/feature/ladder-safety.html](https://archive.cdc.gov/www_cdc_gov/niosh/newsroom/feature/ladder-safety.html)
4. CDC caregiver brochure on head injury in older adults: [stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/25997/cdc\\_25997\\_DS1.pdf](https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/25997/cdc_25997_DS1.pdf); CDC, Older Adult Falls Data: [cdc.gov/falls/data-research/facts-stats](https://www.cdc.gov/falls/data-research/facts-stats)
5. MedlinePlus, Neck injury ([medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000029.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000029.htm)): do not move the person unless there is urgent danger. Get checked guidance: Dr. Jocko's ER guidance. Current as of Oct 10, 2026. All accessed Oct 10, 2026.