

## How to Be a Chiseler—A Safe One

There are many misconceptions about chisellers and chiseling. These result in misuse and abuse that can lead to injury. One of the most common misconceptions is that “a chisel is a chisel.” Wrong. Another is that the only potential hazard in chiseling is being cut by the blade. Wrong again! There are several types of chisels, and a number of hazards caused by misuse. I making sure that you are using the proper chisel for the job remember:

- Cold chisels are used for cutting and chipping metal and should never be used on stone or concrete.
- Brick chisels are designed for scoring and cutting brick. They should be struck with a heavy-handed drilling hammer, not a bricklayers hammer, which is used for cutting masonry. A brick chisel should never be used on metal.
- Wood chisels that have handles of either wood or plastic should be used with soft-faced hammers such as wooden mallets, rubber-faced hammers, or plastic-faced hammers. Some of these chisels have a steel button to set into the end of the handle so they can be tapped with a steel hammer.
- For rough work, a heavy-duty all-steel wood chisels should be used along with a soft-faced hammer, mallet, small sledge, or a hand-drilling hammer.

Before doing any kind of chiseling, you should:

- Be sure you have selected the right type of chisel for the job.
- Check the condition of the chisel.
- Make sure the work is securely braced or clamped.
- Put on your safety goggles.

Make sure the chisel has a sharp, properly ground cutting edge—not only to do a better job, but to do it faster and more safely. Also check the head, or striking surface. If the head is mushroomed, chipped, or badly battered the chisel should not be used.

Never use a common nail hammer to strike a cold chisel, since the hammer or chisel may chip, resulting in injury to your eye or another part of the body. Instead, use a hand drilling hammer—a hand sledge. Incidentally, the face of the hammer should be larger than the head of the chisel.

Never strike a chisel with a hammer that has a loose or damaged handle. The hammer face and handle should be parallel to the chisels striking surface. Take care to avoid glancing blows as well as over, and under strikes with the hammer.