

# News Release

## Orthopaedic Surgeons Provide Tips for Trimming Lawnmower Injuries

**ROSEMONT, Ill.** — People take pride in their lawn. For many, lawns are viewed as the curtain to the home and say a lot about the personality and style of the homeowner. Some like fancy, diagonal cuts; others like longer grass that you can run your feet through; while others prefer short, manicured, professional lawns. To enhance the outside appearance of one's property, either riding or walk behind mowers are used. Though extremely convenient, these powerful tools are also dangerous. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) believes that a majority of injuries sustained from lawnmower use are preventable and extreme caution should be used when operating these machines.

Each year, thousands of Americans suffer deep cuts, loss of fingers and toes, broken bones and joint injuries due to improper use of a lawnmower. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in 2003 more than 76,000 people were treated in hospitals, doctors' offices, clinics, ambulatory surgery centers and hospital emergency rooms for powered lawnmower-related injuries.

“Most individuals do not believe that lawnmowers can pose any type of danger or risk to them or those around them,” said Michael J. Bosse, MD, orthopaedic surgeon, AAOS member and Past President of the Orthopaedic Trauma Association (OTA). **“Lawnmowers are machines, not toys. People need to use common sense when mowing the lawn, and teach children to stay clear of running lawnmowers.”**

To reduce injuries when mowing the lawn, AAOS/OTA recommends the following safety guidelines:

- Read the instruction manual prior to using a lawnmower.
- When using a lawnmower for the first time in a season, have it serviced to make sure it is working properly.
- Be sure the motor is off before inspecting or repairing lawnmower equipment. Never try to dislodge dirt or grass from the lawnmower blades while the machine is running. Use a stick or broom handle when removing debris; never use your hands or feet.
- Wear proper gear while mowing lawn, which includes protective boots, clothing, eyeglasses and shoes. Make sure that you and other adults and children around you are never barefoot when the lawnmower is operational.
- Only one person should use a riding mower at a time.

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- Turn off motor prior to inspecting or repairing power lawnmower equipment.
- Do not permit children to use lawnmower equipment. Children should not be in the yard while the lawn is being mowed.
- Do not remove safety devices, shield or guards on switches.
- Add fuel before starting the engine, not when it is running or hot.
- Do not leave the lawnmower unattended when in use. If you must walk away from the machine, shut off the engine.
- Never consume alcoholic beverages prior to or while mowing the lawn.

Internet users can find additional safety tips and injury prevention information on mowing the lawn and more in the Prevent Injuries America!® Program section of the Academy's web site, [www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org) or [www.orthoinfo.org](http://www.orthoinfo.org) or call the Academy's Public Service line at 800-824-BONES.

An orthopaedic surgeon is a physician with extensive training in the diagnosis and treatment of non-surgical as well as surgical treatment of the musculoskeletal system including bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, muscles and nerves.

With more than 28,000 members, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons ([www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org)) or ([www.orthoinfo.org](http://www.orthoinfo.org)) is a not-for-profit organization that provides education programs for orthopaedic surgeons, allied health professionals and the public. An advocate for improved patient care, the Academy is participating in the Bone and Joint Decade ([www.usbjd.org](http://www.usbjd.org)), the global initiative in the years 2002-2011 to raise awareness of musculoskeletal health to stimulate research and improve people's quality of life. President Bush has declared the years 2002-2011 National Bone and Joint Decade in support of these objectives. The AAOS will celebrate its 75th Anniversary at our 2008 Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Visit [www.aaos.org/75years](http://www.aaos.org/75years) and be a part of our history!

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