TOP 10 CIRCULAR SAW TIPS

Alan Holtham says safety is the watchword for success with this useful workshop machine

1. Lock solid
   - Always make sure that the riving knife is in place and locked securely, with the correct amount of clearance from the blade.

2. Power off
   - Remove the plug to isolate mains saws from the power supply before making any adjustments. With cordless tools, remove the battery.

3. Look sharp
   - Make sure the blade is sharp and clean, and fitted so that it rotates in the correct direction.

Avoiding ragging
- The cut will always rag on the top face of the board, particularly when crosscutting veneered panels, so always cut with the good side underneath. If you need a clean cut on both sides, scribe along the cut line with a craft knife. Alternatively, stick a strip of duct tape along the top line before cutting.

No forcing
- Do not force the saw, particularly on deep cuts, and always use both hands to maximise control and stability.

Blade depth
- For maximum safety, set the blade depth so that it protrudes no more than about 6mm (1/4in) below the cut.

Up to speed
- Keep the blade clear of the work as you switch on and allow it to reach full speed before starting the cut.

On guard
- The guard will often snag on bevel cuts so lift it clear, using the lug provided, as you start the cut.

Support
- Wherever possible, cut with the largest area of the saw base supported on the workpiece rather than on the offcut.

Knot work
- Check the cut line is clear of loose knots that can be thrown back at you by the revolving blade. Always wear safety glasses for this reason.