

## Avoid Getting Caught Up in Your Work

Part of our nature is to resist having something taken away from us, especially when we have a good firm grip on it. This is a normal human response that may be associated with self-preservation or greed. In other words, we don't let go of things easily and may believe that "possession is 90% of the law". This response to stay in "control" can, however, put us at risk when working around machinery that is prone to having crop residue or other material become caught in the operating components. In this demonstration, using a 3-foot piece of ½" PVC pipe or a smooth yard stick, participants will gain a better appreciation of how fast and far a hand can be pulled into the components of a machine when their natural tendency is to hang on rather than to let go.

### Procedure:

1. Grip one end of the pipe or yard stick (make sure it is smooth with no splinters) and invite class participants to firmly grip the other end.
2. Explain that the pipe or yard stick represents a corn stalk hung up in the combine header or a stick jammed in the throat of a rotary mower. Have them imagine both machines are operating, and it is their intent to quickly remove the foreign object and get back to work.

Explain that you, hanging on one end of the pipe or stick represents the material being suddenly pulled into the machine. Each participant hanging onto the other end needs to respond by letting go as fast as possible to avoid being pulled into the machine.

3. Without warning, jerk your end and have the class observe what happens.

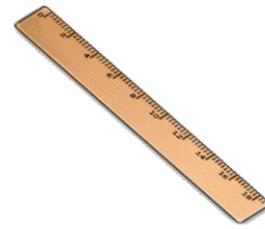
In nearly all cases, the participant's first reaction will be to tighten their grip causing their hand to move towards you 6-12". In some cases, the exercise will turn into a tug-of-war that in a real situation the machine will always win.

Finally, make the point that the machine is always faster and stronger than any human. A hand is never worth risking for a worthless piece of debris. The only safe way to dislodge material from a machine is to first TURN IT OFF.

### Materials Needed



½" PVC pipe,  
approximately  
3' long



Yardstick (must  
be smooth with  
no rough edges  
and splinters)