

IF YOU BANG IT, CURSE LIKE A TROOPER

UNIVERSITY STUDY SUGGESTS SWEARING CAN HELP REDUCE PAIN'S INTENSITY, WRITES BROWN



TED BROWN
Column

There's not a person on the face of the earth who hasn't stubbed a toe or nailed a shin on something solid.

And, at the same time, I'm almost certain everyone who has felt the aforementioned unplanned contact with an immovable object has uttered an expletive after nailing that body part.

But that's OK.

Last year, I came across a report from Keele University in England claiming that if you let loose with a bout of profanity after hitting your thumb with a hammer, it apparently reduces the intensity of the pain.

The report, posted on the university's website, explained how a research team used volunteers to test their theory. Each submerged their hand in a tub of ice water for as long as possible while repeating a swear word. They then repeated the experiment, this time using a tamer word.

The researchers found the volunteers were able to keep their hands sub-

merged in the ice-cold water longer when they used the salty language, suggesting there is a link between swearing and pain tolerance.

Sheesh, that's nothing new. I've known it all along.

In my 67 years, I've banged, cut, smashed, pinched or shocked at least all my fingers, a couple toes, both shins and God only knows what else. And without fail, I've pretty much always responded with profanity.

My choice of words is slightly influenced by the company present when my body part comes in contact with a solid object. But I still say it - and it feels better.

On top of that, I'm a firm believer that you've got to cut loose once in a while, not only to sooth the pain but to get the taste back in your mouth.

To further prove my point, last Monday the Sidekick nailed her finger with the handle of a pitch fork while forking hay into the feeder. She hit the top of the feeder, pinching her finger between the handle and the feeder. (Sort of like hitting her finger with a wooden mallet.)

True to form, she treated the unfortunate finger with profanity. I was duly impressed. I figure she must have picked up her vocabulary from her time in the armed forces.

And I will admit, her fingertip was a nasty shade of purple.

Apparently treating pain with profanity dates back to the beginning of

mankind. Even cavemen must have had a few words that weren't socially acceptable.

Years ago, I discovered the fine art of swearing isn't limited to adolescents and adults, as we would be quick to assume.

I was at an event where a kid jumped up on a chair and nailed her shin on the edge of the chair beside her.

Ordinarily, we'd expect a little kid to run crying to her parents.

Not her. She cursed like a little trooper. And I bet she felt a whole lot better for it. (Mind you, judging by the response from her mom, I'm sure there were some choice words exchanged later).

Personally, I feel there's a fine art to profanity. It's a true artist who can come up with a new combination of swear words that make other "swearers" stare and observe in a moment of silent, sombre respect.

So it's official, right from the researchers' mouths: if you bang it, it's OK to swear, 'cause it's gonna feel better.

Naturally, some folks are judgmental with those of us who use earthy language. But remember: everyone does it, at some point.

Even the most staunch church-going little old lady can be brought to drop an F-bomb, with one word.

Just yell "BINGO!" at the weekly game.

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THEN & NOW



Esquesing Historical Society



Alison Walker photo

The W.H. Storey & Son Glove Factory in Acton was founded by William Heslop, who became Acton's first Reeve. The building was built in 1882 and demolished in 1962. A year later, the post office that still exists on Bower Street was built on the site.

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