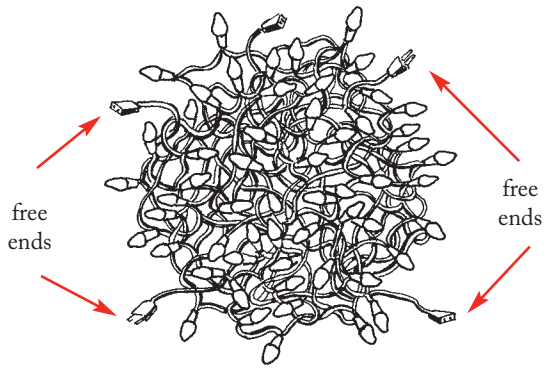
WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

HOW TO SURVIVE CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHT DISASTERS

How to Untangle Christmas Tree Lights

1 **Remain calm.**
Untangling tree lights can be a frustrating and prolonged process. Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing; turn on cheerful music; and sit in a comfortable chair. Trying to work quickly will only make you more frustrated and result in further tangles.



Stay calm. Trying to work quickly will only result in further tangles.

2 **Unplug all connected strands.**
Light strands plugged into one another can create a very complex, knotted loop. Unplug all strands so that your tangle contains several separate sections.

3 **Find a free end.**
Do not attempt to untangle the lights from the center of the knotted mass. If there is more than one free end, pick one.

4 **Loosen all the knots.**
Splay your fingers open within the tangles of the knots to loosen them. When the knots are all loose, open a hole through the tangle to separate the free end from the mass.

5 **Wind the free end methodically back through each knot.**
Do not yank on the free end; gently work it through the untangled knots. Always treat the strands gently to avoid breaking the bulbs.

6 **Untie each successive knot carefully.**
Keep the free end rolled to make it easier to work with and to reduce the length of cord you need to pass through the knots.

7 **Keep the free end under control.**
Never pull on the free end. Pulling will tighten the tangle and make the knots harder to untie. As you work, the knot-free section should continue to get longer. Even if the tangle seems to be getting more severe, if the knot-free section is lengthening, you will ultimately succeed.

8 **Repeat as necessary.**
Once one strand of lights has been removed from the tangle, repeat the process with another free end until each strand is removed and the tangle eliminated. Keep yourself hydrated.

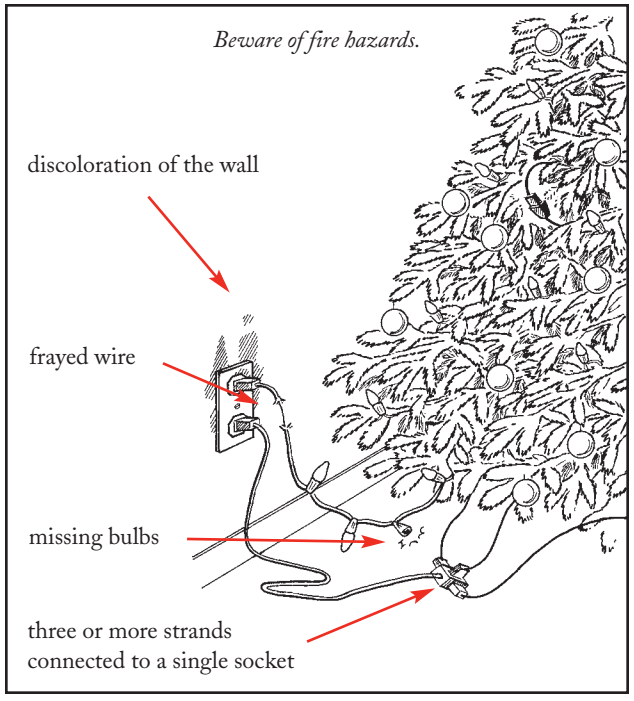
Be Aware

- The best way to prevent light strands from tangling is to coil them around a stiff piece of cardboard before putting them away.
- Severely knotted strands may take hours to untangle. If you do not wish to spend time in this manner, consider buying new lights. The cost of tree lights has dropped considerably in recent years.

How to Respond to Prolonged Tree-Light Shock

Faulty lights or extension cords may pose a risk of electrocution.

1 **Do not touch a victim still connected to the power source.**
Shut off power at the breaker/fuse box as quickly as possible. You must eliminate the power source before handling the light string or touching the victim. Once the power is off, it is safe to touch the victim.



2 **If the fuse/breaker box cannot be found, kick out the cord.**

Use a rubber-soled shoe to kick the cord out of the wall outlet. Do not use a broom or another object to try to separate the victim from the power source; these items may have some conductivity.

3 **Instruct someone to call for emergency medical technicians.**

Administer CPR.

Be Aware

- Never connect more than three strands to a single socket. Count an extension cord as one strand.
- Check the condition of all light strands. Look for frayed wire, cuts, and cracking of the cords. Discard any lights in poor condition, or any strands with rusting sockets.
- Use light strands that have been approved by a certified testing lab.
- To reduce shock risk, always keep bulbs in all light sockets. Newer strands will light even with burned out or defective bulbs: Either replace the bad bulb before using the lights or leave the burnt bulb in place. Make sure connections between strands are tight.
- Check the outlet and wall area around it for discoloration, which may be a sign that the outlet is faulty.
- Light strands may be slightly warm to the touch; this is not unusual. However, if they are hot, unplug and replace them, or use another outlet.
- Never coil light strands when they are connected to power; this will generate heat and may cause a fire. Unplug lights during the day to reduce heat buildup.
- If using outdoor lights, wrap connections between strands with electrical tape, and make sure connetions at the power source are protected from moisture.
- Plugging light strands into a surge protector does not offer protection from electric shock. These devices are designed to protect property from current spikes or surges, not to protect people from the current leakages that cause electric shock.