

The redirect in five moves

1

Ask why

“Why do you want to do that?”

2

Tie it to what they want most

A safe tree, or no leaves in the gutter? They have to pick.

3

Show it on the tree

Point, measure, hold the pole. People don't retain a lecture.

4

Offer the smaller cut or a different method

The tips, not the limb. Air and hand tools, not the machine.

5

Write the limit down

Cut size, clearance, and what the work will not do.



The fishing pole



16 oz at 100 in. = 1,600 ounce-inches at the hand

16



12 oz at 80 in. = 960 ounce-inches

12

25%

less weight on the end

About 40%

less turning
force at the
hand

So where should pruning be done? In the ends of the branches.



My arithmetic, counting the weights only. The pole's own weight changes the exact figure.

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The weigh-in



1. Mark the cuts



2. Weigh what comes off



3. Measure the largest cut

421 lb

came off the end of
one limb

Under 3 in.

was the largest cut

38%

less strain on a live oak
stem after about 20%
of its mass came off



Photos and weights: my Physics and Trees class. Strain: Gilman, Miesbauer, Masters 2015.

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Numbers worth writing down

	The number	Whose
Reduction cut	Back to a lateral at least 1/3 the diameter of what comes off	ISA
Cut size	1 to 3 in. on decay-prone trees; up to 6 in. or more on trees that resist decay	UF/IFAS
My live cut cap	3 in.	My company
Mature tree dose	Under 10% of live foliage unless there is a good reason	UF/IFAS
Root cuts	5 trunk diameters or more from the trunk; farther on a mature tree	UF/IFAS
Palms	Nothing above 9 and 3	UF/IFAS
Mulch	2 to 4 in. deep, kept off the trunk	ISA



None of these is a safe harbor. Species, age, health, and site change the answer.

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