

Oh No, Not Math!

Many of us have a fear of numbers and math. In fact, this fear has a name, "math phobia". Kids moving through the school system often name math as the one skill area they think they'll never use, particularly algebra, geometry or, heaven forbid, trigonometry.

At the Training and Learning Centre (TLC), we understand the fear of math. Many of our students that are looking for work or wanting to continue their education, have been out of school for awhile. They know they need to upgrade their math skills, and they know they don't want to. Most jobs on the shop floor, in retail, and in food service, for example, require some ability to use numbers. Skills in measuring and making calculations, estimating, working with money or using spreadsheets on the computer are often required.

Let's take a closer look at a job in retail. As a sales associate, you may need to calculate discounts, refunds, taxes, or currency exchange. Math is required for all of these computations. Of course, other skills are also required for this position, but to be qualified for this particular job a good foundation in math is a prerequisite.

There are many instances beyond the demands of work that require us to use some math skills. Here is a quote from a recent *Field and Stream* article about ensuring your most accurate shot when bow hunting:

"When bow hunting from a tree stand, you can get a better shot off if you use math to find out the true distance from the base of the tree. Ten yards out isn't the same as from your stand to the deer. $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$, when "a" is the distance off the ground to where you are sitting in the stand, "b" is the distance from the base of the tree to the deer, and "c" is the distance from where you are in the stand to the deer".

Sometimes, algebra really does have some practical use!

If you're interested in upgrading your math skills, please call Sue at TLC Monday to Friday 8:30 to 4pm, or come on in and visit us at 232 Bridge Street. There's always coffee on.