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Robots a 'Lethal' Danger in the Kitchen

Posted on 10 May 2010 by jjkomplett in [News](#)

A study based in Germany has concluded that having a robot round the house may prove harmful to humans in the long run. Though, rather than robots rising together in a mass revolution to overthrow their human oppressors, apparently the problem boils down to them being a little bit clumsy with sharp kitchen implements.



Beware any recent films made by this robot anyway.

Three researchers – based at Institute of Robotics and Mechatronics at the German aerospace agency – studied what happens in accidents involving robots using sharp tools alongside humans. They used a robot arm holding a variety of bladed tools programmed to strike test substances that mimic soft tissue. In some cases, the researchers found, the robots managed to accidentally inflict wounds that would prove “lethal”. The tests were conducted to see if a prototype safety system could limit the damage done.

The BBC [reports](#) that the tests involved a robot arm weighing 14kg and a 1.1m reach that was equipped with a variety of bladed household tools including a steak knife, kitchen knife, scissors and screwdriver. The robot arm was programmed to use the bladed tools to stab and cut a silicone lump, a leg from a dead pig and the arm of a (hopefully well paid) human volunteer.

The results of the study were presented at the 2010 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation, held in Alaska in early May. Researchers at the German aerospace agency wanted to carry out the tests because they envisage a future in which robots will start to become domestic helpers.

Injuries were said to be significantly reduced when a prototype collision detection system developed by the trio was switched on. This system uses torque sensors to spot when it has hit a different substance and halts movement.

Thankfully, it was used to limit damage when human subjects were tested.

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