

Transcript of Jennifer Geddes, Electrician

The coolest thing about my job is... I can take my career to great heights!

Being an electrician is about pulling in all the wiring for a building; it's about doing the electrical distribution for either your house or a large plant facility, so we get to work on a lot of different things in a lot of different places.

I love my job. One of my favorite things is actually working up on lifts at high heights; it's kind of exciting. It was purely by fluke that I ended up being an electrician. I was a university student, I had a lot of debt at the time, I needed to make money. I knew a lot of people who were welders, mechanics and they made really good money, and it just seemed to me, "why couldn't I make that kind of money?"

One of the things about being a tradesperson is that there is a certain community about people who work in the construction field, and you really get a sense of it when you're on the job and you're in that construction trade that we tend to look out for each other and we tend to help each other because we are constantly coordinating on site. Historically we always talked about it as a brotherhood but the reality is that there are women in it now, but it's still got that family sense to it.

If you want to become a journeyman electrician today, you could certainly work residential, there's construction which we call commercial construction. They can go and get their electrical industrial ticket versus just a construction ticket, so now they be working, at say, a plant facility versus doing new construction; so new building set-up. They'll also be doing service work and trouble shooting. Renovations is a big one nowadays, a lot of people are doing renovations on their home.

Definitely for electrical, math and science are a big deal; you need to have strong mathematical skills. One thing that helped me is making sure that in high school I took grade 10, 11, and 12 academic math. It made it a lot easier for me in the long term to do troubleshooting as opposed to people who didn't have those skills.

I learned a lot about myself in this trade, I think when you find something that fits your personality you grow as a person and definitely with electrical that was it for me. And it wasn't just because I was an electrician, it was because I was in the construction trades and I learned a lot of mechanical skills that helped me gain a lot of self-confidence; that confidence helped me in all aspects of my life and career.

If you think the construction trades are for you, you should go for it no matter what anyone says. Often those people who told me I couldn't make it are the ones who are patting me on the back today for what I've done; so, follow your heart.