

How to Keep Safe While Gardening

Gardening is a great activity, but we tend to forget how physically demanding working in a garden all day can be.

Here are some tips from the Canadian Physiotherapy Association to keep you in shape for the entire season:

1. Do a warm up before you start. Do some shoulder circles, trunk rotation and mimic movements like raking. Include some light stretches, (see attached article for examples).
2. Repeat the light stretches from your warm up when you are finished gardening for the day.
3. When raking or hoeing keep your back straight, use your arms and avoid twisting the trunk.
4. When weeding or planting squat or kneel on a kneeling pad instead of bending over at the waist. You can also use tools with long handles when weeding to avoid kneeling.
5. Use a potting bench or counter top when possible to avoid unnecessary bending.
6. When shoveling lift small amounts at a time, keep your back straight and bend at the knees.
7. Make sure when you're lifting to keep the load close to your body, and lift from your knees.
8. Don't lift items that are too heavy for you – use a wheelbarrow or wagon to help transport heavy loads
9. When Pruning or trimming stay close to your work, don't stretch beyond your stable footing
10. Make sure to use the right tools for you – ensure handles are the correct size for your hand, they have an appropriate amount of grip and that their length is appropriate for your height (depending on the tool).
11. Give yourself lots of time to complete big projects, don't try to do it all in one day, spread it out over a number of weeks.

For more in depth tips, tricks, and pictures of stretches check out the link to “GARDENING TIPS AND TECHNIQUES” information sheet on the CPA's website:

<http://www.physiotherapy.ca/PublicUploads/222460GardeningInfo.pdf>