

Plant and Rake Without the Ache

Gardening is a great outdoor activity anyone can enjoy. But, like any other location in the home, the garden is also a place where injury can occur. These helpful tips will keep your back in check and your garden in bloom.

WARM UP BEFORE YOU START

Before you get going, warm up your muscles with a brisk 10-minute walk around the block or even on the spot. Swing your arms and lift your knees to enhance the benefits.

S-T-R-E-T-C-H

Follow your warm up with these easy, low-impact stretches. Repeat each stretch five times. Relax and do not overextend when you stretch. Remember to take frequent stretch breaks while working in the yard.

Your sides

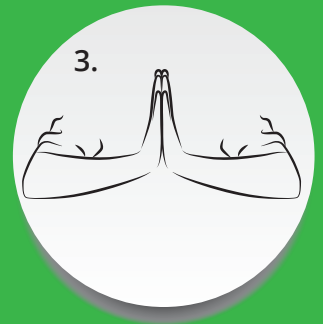
1. Extend your right arm over your head.
2. Bend toward the left from the waist.
3. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat on the other side.



If you experience back pain that lasts more than a few days, consult a chiropractor for an evaluation. To find a chiropractor near you, visit chiropractic.ca.

Your wrists

1. Hold one arm out in front of you, palm down. Bend your wrist until the fingers point to the ground; use your opposite hand to hold this position.
2. Hold one arm in front of you and place your palm in the “stop” position; use your opposite hand to hold this position.
3. Place your hands in “prayer” position, and press your palms together.



Your thighs

1. Steady yourself against a tree, wall or railing.
2. Bend your right knee and grasp the ankle with your left hand.
3. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat with your left knee.

Your back

1. In a seated position, bend forward from the hips, keeping your head down.
2. Touch your fingers to the ground.

Your arms and shoulders

1. Let your arms hang loosely at your sides; rotate your shoulders back and forth.
2. Hug yourself snugly and slowly rotate at the waist to the left and the right.

THE RIGHT MOVES

Bend your knees to lift with ease

Before lifting, position yourself close to the object. Keep your back straight and bend your knees using your leg and arm muscles to smoothly and slowly lift the load. Keep the load close to your body and pivot – don't twist – to turn.

Stay hydrated

Drink lots of water to keep your body well hydrated. The discs of your spine require water to keep them cushioned and functioning properly.

Take a break

Rest when you're tired and take time out for stretching to loosen tense muscles.



10 TIPS FOR A HEALTHY BACK

1. Exercise regularly.
2. Follow a healthy diet.
3. Maintain good posture.
4. Warm up and cool down before and after physical activity.
5. Don't overload your backpack or shoulder bag.
6. Stretch your legs and back after each hour of sitting.
7. Never cradle the phone between your neck and shoulder.
8. Sleep on your back or side, not on your stomach.
9. Invest in a good chair, pillow and mattress.
10. Have regular spinal checkups.

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