



Gardening Tips



A warm up before you start your gardening work-out helps to reduce muscle strain, injury and or fatigue.

March on the spot until you feel warm, then take a few minutes to stretch. Repeat the stretches again at the end of your activity.

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Stay Safe While Working Outside

When trying to think of fun and healthful outdoor activities, consider choosing gardening this year. Studies have shown that while working outside and looking at scenes of nature, a person can experience declines in systolic blood pressure and overall stress levels may decrease. One reason that nature may aid a person in reducing tension is that it has the ability to put an individual into a state of meditation, focusing their mind on the beautiful surroundings. Nature scenes even can make a person stop obsessing and worrying!

Other benefits of working outside include exposure to Vitamin D from the sunshine and exercise. Gardening uses all the major muscle groups; legs, shoulders, buttocks, stomach, neck, arms and joints all receive a workout! However, you must keep in mind that these activities need to be of a moderate nature and if you do not follow proper guidelines, injuries can occur. Use the tips below to ensure safe gardening/yard work techniques because after all, you are more likely to stick to an exercise or outdoor activity that you truly enjoy!

Tip #1 - Gradually Increase Activity: If you have not been exercising regularly, it is best to ease in to any physical activity. Start by working for short periods of time gradually increasing frequency and duration. If you have questions on whether the activity is safe for you it is best to contact your physician.

Tip #2 - Listen to Your Body: Keep in mind that sore muscles aren't a sign that you've exercised well. Symptoms such as stiffness and pain can be avoided by using proper stretching and warm up techniques-even for gardening!

Tip #3 - Alternate: Break up your more strenuous yard working activities. Stop a session of post-hole digging with some relaxing transplanting. Also, try alternating hands during your various workouts.

Tip #4 - Use ROM: Preparing to garden is much like preparing to do any moderate exercise activity. Complete stretching and ROM (Range of Motion) exercises with your wrists and fingers to prevent stiffening of the tendons which affect your elbows. Also, use correct movements and positions when lifting-do not use your back!

(Some information for this flyer gathered at www.webmd.com and www.garden.org)