

Pain-Free Gardening Tips

Gardening is a great way to stay active and enjoy the outdoors, but without proper precautions, it can lead to aches, pains, and even injuries. Protect your body and make the most of your time in the garden with these simple, pain-free gardening tips!



Lift Smart

Bend your knees, keep your back straight, and lift with your legs—not your back.



Wear Supportive Footwear

Protect your feet and joints with proper shoes and avoid flip flops!



Use Raised Garden Beds

Reduce the need to bend or kneel with elevated planters.



Take Breaks and Hydrate

Regular breaks and plenty of water help prevent fatigue and cramps.



Switch Positions Often

Avoid overuse injuries by rotating between sitting, kneeling, and standing.



Listen to Your Body

If it hurts, stop. Rest instead of pushing through discomfort.



Use Ergonomic Tools

Padded handles and long grips reduce strain on hands, wrists, and back.



Warm up

Stretch your back, shoulders & legs to prep your body.

Check out the back for simple stretches and exercises to help prevent injury and keep you feeling your best!



EXERCISES

Many gardening-related injuries can be prevented with a proper warm-up. The following stretches can help you loosen up before you dig in the dirt or tend to your plants.



TRAPEZIUS STRETCH: While standing, reach behind your back with your right arm, and use your opposite hand to traction your right arm as far as possible toward your left hip. While looking straight ahead, gently tilt your head sideways toward the left. Against the resistance of your arm, attempt to elevate your right shoulder toward your right ear for seven seconds. Relax and stretch your neck further toward the left. "Lock-in" to each new position, and do not allow any slack. Repeat three contract/relax cycles on each side twice per day or as directed.



CODMAN PENDULUM: Lean over a table using the uninvolvement arm for support as shown. If directed, you may hold a light weight in your hand to increase traction. Allow the involved arm to hang freely. Use your torso to swing your involved arm in a clock-wise circle for 50 repetitions. Repeat in a counter-clockwise circle for 50 repetitions. Perform 50 repetitions in each direction twice per day or as directed.



WRIST FLEXOR STRETCH: Straighten your arm in front of you with your hand at chest level, palm up. Keep your elbow locked and use your opposite hand to grasp your fingers and gently pull down on your fingers until you feel a stretch in your forearm. Keep your elbow straight throughout the exercise. Against the resistance of your opposite hand, contract your wrist and fingers upward for seven seconds. Relax and increase the stretch on your wrist and forearm by pulling downward and backward on your fingers. "Lock in" to the new position and repeat three contract/relax cycles twice per day or as directed.



WRIST EXTENSOR STRETCH: Begin standing with your arm straightened in front of you at chest level. Keep your elbow straight and flex your wrist so that your fingers are pointed toward the floor. With your opposite hand, grasp the back of your hand and bend your wrist and fingers downward into flexion. You may rotate your wrist toward your small finger to further increase the stretch. Against the resistance of your opposite hand, attempt to straighten your wrist for seven seconds. Relax and stretch your wrist and fingers further. "Lock in" to this new position and repeat three contract/relax cycles twice per day or as directed.



CAT-COW STRETCH: Begin on all 4's with your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips. Extend your back upward into a "mad cat" position. Next, flex your back downward to sag into an "old horse" position. Slowly transition back and forth between these two positions. Repeat in a slow coordinated movement as directed.



HAMSTRING STRETCH: Stand with your heel propped up on an elevated surface, keeping your knee and back straight as shown in the picture. Slowly lean forward at your hip, not through your back, until a stretch is felt in the hamstring. Contract your hamstring to push your heel downward for seven seconds. Relax and lean forward through your hip to further stretch your hamstring. Keep your knee and back straight throughout this exercise. Perform as directed.



KNEELING HIP FLEXOR STRETCH: Begin in a half-kneeling position with the side to be stretched on the floor and your opposite knee bent at 90 degrees, foot planted on the floor. Shift your pelvis forward slowly, keeping your hips and back straight. Against the resistance of the floor, contract your involved thigh in an attempt to flex it forward toward your chest for seven seconds. Relax and shift your pelvis further forward to increase the stretch. Keep your trailing leg rotated outward. "Lock in" to each new position and perform three contract/relax cycles twice per day or as directed. For a more intense stretch, lean your upper body away from the side being stretched.



STANDING GASTROCNEMIUS STRETCH: Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall at head level. Your affected leg to be stretched should be back and straight with your heel on the floor. Your unaffected leg may be bent in front of your for support. While keeping your back straight, lean forward until you feel a stretch in your calf. Against the resistance of the floor, attempt to push the toes of your trailing foot into the floor for seven seconds. Do not lift your heel off of the floor. Relax and lean further forward to increase the stretch. "Lock in" to this new position and repeat three contract/relax cycles on each side twice per day or as directed.