



Easy Gardening Tips that Will SAVE your back!

1. PLAN AHEAD- prepare the tools that you will need in a bucket before you start. This will save time and effort to have everything in one place.

2. WARM-UP- gardening is exercise! Warm up your body prior with a walk around the yard, swinging arms to get ready for work ahead.

3. USE PROPER TOOLS- using tools with longer handles saves back from being in sustained bent over postures.

4. PROPER LIFTING- feet must be planted, shoulder width apart, bending knees and keeping load close to body. ***IMPORTANT-** to engage core muscle, keep them tight and NEVER twist with a load.

5. 2-WHEELED WHEELBARROW- helps to minimize twisting of the torso and stabilizes the load.

6. DEBRIS REMOVAL- use a shovel instead of bending over to pick up yard waste.

7. VARY YOUR TASK- i.e. don't do all of the digging on the same day!

8. POSTURE- watch the position of your back while gardening, trying to maintain a neutral straight line in your spine. Avoid rounding the upper back and straining the neck by long period of looking up/down or side to side.

9. USE RAISED BED/POTS- bringing the garden area up higher reduces the amount of time spent bending over and/or on your knees.

10. DIGGING- make sure to have a wide base of support and move your feet to new positions instead of twisting your body.

****Most IMPORTANTLY** remember to *Pace yourself-* Listen to your body AND Ask for Help- if a certain task is too difficult and/or taxing on your body!

SPINAL STENOSIS- degeneration causing narrowing of spinal canal leading to inflammation within the nerve tracts.

CONGENITAL DISEASES- such as scoliosis may predispose individuals to chronic pain due to abnormal curvatures in the spine

Although some causes of back pain are unavoidable, there are many preventive measures that can be taken to reduce the risk. So as the warm weather approaches don't let gardening be a chore, enjoy it and practice the following strategies to stay healthy and injury free.



NOW TRY THESE...

Low Back & Core Strengthening Exercises



DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Lie down on your back with a slight bend in the knees (use a pillow for support), relax hands on stomach. Take a deep breath in through your nose raising your hands up towards the ceiling and out expanding to full capacity. Exhale through mouth bringing belly button towards spine.

**Perform: 5mins intervals*

BRIDGE

Lie on your back with your feet shoulder width apart, knees bent at 45°. Sequence: 1. Bring belly button to spine tightening core, 2. Squeeze butt 3. Drive pelvis forward creating a straight line from shoulders to knees ***NOTE:** weight going through rear 2/3rds of your feet, knees are not pointing inwards and core remains active and tight.

**Perform 3 sets of 10 reps each leg 3 times per week*



BIRDDOG-EXTENSIONS ALL-4'S

Start in an all-4's position on hands and knees, knees hip width and hands stacked directly under shoulder joint. From this position engage core (pull belly button to spine), squeeze right butt and extend right leg and at the same time raise right arm. ***NOTE-** hips always face ground during exercise, they do not rotate and always maintain an active tight core.

**Perform: 3 sets of 10 reps each leg 3 times per week*



PLANK

Begin on stomach, put each elbow underneath shoulder and push up off ground onto toes. Tighten your core and maintain a straight line from your neck to your legs. ***Note-** do not let your hips sag, maintain a strong flat back.

**Perform for 30 secs-1 min every day.*

