

Gardening Tips



Reduce joint stress

- Use larger muscles for gardening tasks. Ex: use shoulder muscles instead of wrist muscles when using a trowel
- Use long handled tools that allow you to stand, not stoop
- Enlarge hand grips on commonly used garden items to decrease the gripping effort. Build up handles with foam or tape
- Use a good pair of gloves for better grip

Choose easy-to-use tools

- Sprayer nozzle with hands free clip
- Power gear pruner or lopper
- Large grip trowels
- Lightweight or long handled tools
- Light weight hoses
- Tools with alternative hand grips that keep hand and wrist in neutral, stress free position



Spread the load

- Push items rather than pull, when possible. Drag before lift.
- When lifting, keep the elbows tucked in to the sides to reduce shoulder and elbow strain
- Use a wheelbarrow or cart to haul tools and supplies around the garden
- Avoid combined twisting and lifting



Minimize repetitive motions, such as gripping, twisting, continuous squatting, kneeling, or stooping

Alter layout of flower beds

- Vertical or T shaped layouts keep gardens within reach
- Create narrow deep beds (1.2 m) with pathways to avoid compacting the soil and reduce digging

Use a stool, chair or raised garden beds



- Allows for sitting rather than kneeling or crouching to plant seeds
- If you need to kneel, use knee pads, a padded bench, or a kneeling pad

Weed smarter, not longer

- Reduce the number of weeds by covering soil with a 5 cm (2 inch) layer of shredded bark. This stops the soil from getting any light and makes it more difficult for weeds to grow
- Weed after irrigating or rain as moist soil makes it easier to pull weeds with less resistance

Plan ahead and pace yourself

- Make a list of garden tasks for the day and switch between harder and gentler tasks
- Take periodic stretch breaks as well as longer breaks. Use a timer to monitor your limits.
- Work during the time of day that you feel best. Ex: if you feel stiff in the morning, save gardening activities for the afternoon



Treat the pain

- Consider treating existing pain *before* starting to garden

- Do not be tempted to do more activity because you do not feel pain
- If you have pain that lasts more than 2 hours after activity, or soreness lasting into the next day, you have done too much. Treat your symptoms and try to do less the next time.
- Apply ice to reduce inflammation and pain

Gardening Resources

<http://www.carryongardening.org.uk/>

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/living-with-arthritis/gardening/>

Gardening Equipment

<http://www.fiskars.ca/Products/Yard-and-Garden>

<https://www.leevalley.com/en-ca/shop/garden>

<https://www.homedepot.ca/en/home/categories/outdoors/lawn-and-garden-centre/lawn-and-garden-tools.html>

<https://www.walmart.ca/en/outdoor-living/garden-center/garden-tools-and-equipment/other-gardening-tools-and-accessories/N-1762>

<https://www.lowes.ca/dept/lawn-garden-hand-tools-garden-tools-gardening-landscaping-outdoor-a1884>