

IMG PHYSICAL THERAPY

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RETURN TO GARDENING

When springtime arrives and our gardens are calling, we must remember that the most important gardening tool we have is our body. The first few mild weekends send many people outdoors to tackle raking, mowing, weeding, and gardening. Inactivity during the winter months can increase the chances of injury. Thirty minutes of yard work provides great health benefits, including increased flexibility, strength, and endurance. So get out there, but follow these tips to help avoid aches and pains caused by gardening.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...WARM-UP & STRETCH!

- Warm-up activities may include a 5 minute walk or easy raking to warm-up your muscles.
- Start with gentle stretching of the arms, legs, and back before gardening. Tight musculature may restrict movement and forceful movement may cause a strain to a muscle or sprain to a ligament.
- Hold each stretch for 30 sec. **SEE ATTACHED LIST FOR IDEAS FOR STRETCHING.**
- Strength is important to back care and helps with stabilization of the spine.
SEE ATTACHED LIST FOR ALL STRENGTHENING EXERCISES.

TIPS FOR SPECIFIC OUTDOOR/GARDENING ACTIVITIES

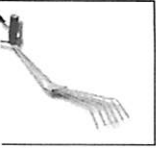
- **Raking:** Keep your tools close to your body and back straight; use your arms and avoid twisting your trunk; use long-handled tools suited to your height
- **Weeding or planting:** Do not bend from the waist. Squat or kneel on a kneeling pad and use the support handle for assistance when getting up from the ground. Use long-handled tools to avoid stooping or kneeling. Squat or sit when using a trowel.
- **Digging or shoveling:** Insert the head of the shovel vertically into the ground, step on the blade, and lift small amounts at a time. Bend your knees and use your legs, not your back, to lift the load. Do not twist. Use a smaller shovel so you do not lift loads that are too heavy.
- **Lifting or carrying:** Bend your knees (not your back) keep the load close to your body, do not lift items that are too heavy for you to handle. Use a wagon or a wheelbarrow to transport supplies or carry heavy items
- **Pruning or trimming:** Get as close to the tree or bush as possible, use a step-stool or ladder if you are pruning or trimming above shoulder height. Your hand should remain in line with your forearm, grip the tools lightly to avoid injury.

TOOLS THAT HELP MAKE GARDENING EASIER:

- **Gardening Gloves:** Protect the hands from hazardous chemicals, sharp items, and blisters as well as minimizing the effects of vibration. Should be form-fitting and not restrictive
- **Tools:** Should be lightweight yet sturdy and measured to fit your body height to avoid excess strain on the body.
 - Handles should be cylindrical in shape, should provide equal pressure along the entire arch of the palm, and made of compressed rubber to minimize friction and prevent slipping
 - Longer handles to provide greater leverage from digging into even the hardest soil and minimizes the need to bend over (i.e. long-handled weeder and bulb planters)
- **Kneeling pad/bench:** Foam-padded bench, kneeler, or knee pads that allows gardeners to work from a sitting or kneeling position. Helps remove weight from sore joints while maintaining correct posture.
- **Garden carts:** Cart that holds all your gardening tools to eliminate bending.
- **For more information:** www.bionicgloves.com, www.gardenbandit.com, www.handhelpers.com, www.fiskars.com, www.2vertex.com

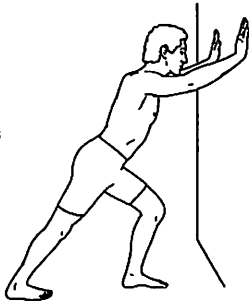
OTHER TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Muscles fatigue in less than thirty minutes of repetitive activities so rotate each gardening activity with ones that require different muscle groups and body positions
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration while gardening
- Take a break for a few minutes each hour, even if you do not feel fatigued
- Keep hand tools sharp and keep moving parts in good working order and oiled
- Build or buy a potting bench that is high enough to prevent unnecessary bending
- If possible, raise the garden beds if your back or arthritic joint pain is limiting you
- Exercise regularly, something as simple as a daily walk is good
- **AVOID:**
 - Bending at the waist
 - Twisting and lifting
 - Sitting in a slouched position
 - Holding your breath while lifting
- If twisting cannot be avoided, keep your stomach muscles tight to protect your back
- If you do injure yourself, stop the activity. Apply a cold pack to injured joints and heat to injured muscles, rest, and consult your doctor.
- Be **SMART**- **S**tretch, **M**ove, **A**dd it up, **R**educe strain, **T**alk to a physical therapist
 - Stretch- as a warm-up, a break, and as a cool-down
 - Move- Keep mobile especially during the winter months
 - Add it up- being active for one hour each day helps to maintain mobility. Plan activities that will get you moving for ten minute periods throughout the day
 - Reduce strain- alternate chores throughout the day and use ergonomic tools
 - Talk to a physical therapist- they are mobility experts who can treat injuries and help you avoid further injury and strain

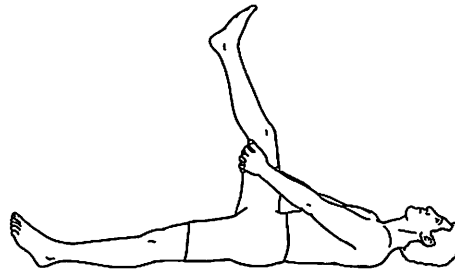


ANKLE / FOOT - 14 Gastroc Stretch

Stand with one foot back, leg straight, forward leg bent. Keeping heel on floor, lean into wall until stretch is felt in calf. Hold 30 seconds. Repeat with other leg. Then Repeat with back knee bent.



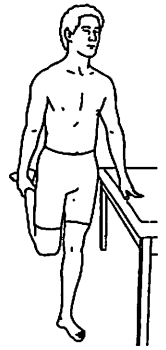
HIP / KNEE - 38 Stretching: Hamstring with Towel



Use a towel around your foot (not pictured), slowly straighten knee until stretch is felt in back of thigh. Hold 30 seconds. Switch Legs.

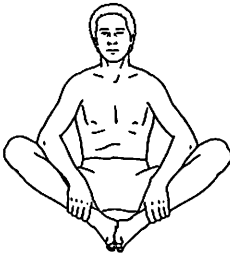
HIP / KNEE - 37 Stretching: Quadriceps (Standing)

Pull heel toward buttock until stretch is felt in front of thigh. Hold 30 seconds. Switch Legs.

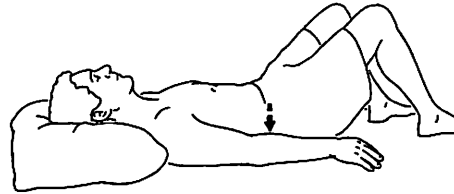


HIP / KNEE - 32 Stretching: Inner Thigh / Groin

Place heels together and pull feet toward groin until stretch is felt in groin and inner thigh. Hold 30 seconds.



TRUNK STABILITY - 4 Isometric Abdominal



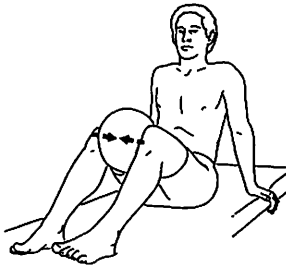
Lying on back with knees bent, tighten stomach by pulling belly button in toward the bed. Hold 10 seconds. Perform 10 times.

TRUNK STABILITY - 24 Isometric Gluteals



Tighten buttock muscles. Hold 10 seconds Repeat 10 times.

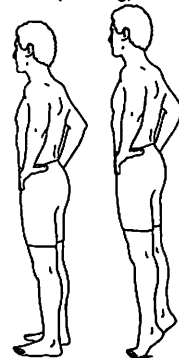
HIP / KNEE - 16 Ball / Pillow Squeezes



With ball or folded pillow between knees, squeeze knees together. Hold 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times per set.

ANKLE / FOOT - 20 Heel Raise: Bilateral (Standing)

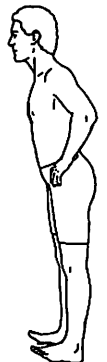
Rise on balls of feet.



Repeat 2 sets of 15

ANKLE / FOOT - 22 Toe Raise (Standing)

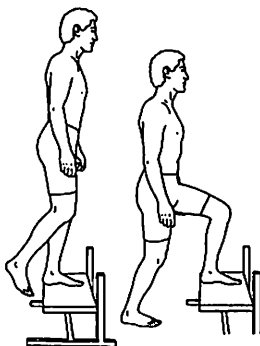
Rock back on heels. Stand up straight. Do not stick butt backwards.



Repeat for 2 sets of 15.

HIP / KNEE - 52 Step-Up

Stand with one leg on stair step or stool. Slowly stand up. Slowly lower one leg back to floor. One leg always stays on step. left leg, lowering other foot to floor. Return by straightening front leg.



Repeat for 2 sets of 15.

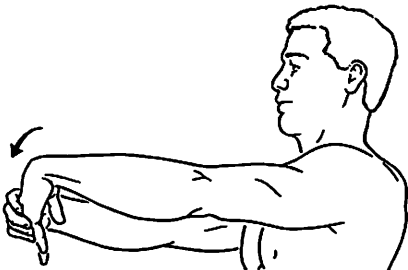
TRUNK STABILITY - 31 Minisquats

While holding onto chair or pole (not pictured), sit back into the chair. Do not round your back or let your knees go forward. Knees should bend.



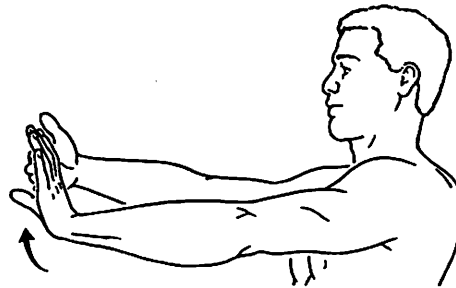
Repeat for 2 sets of 15

HAND - 14 Wrist Extensor Stretch



Keeping elbow straight, grasp left hand and slowly bend wrist forward until stretch is felt. Hold 30 seconds. Switch Arms.

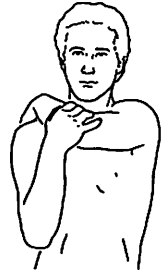
HAND - 13 Wrist Flexor Stretch



Keeping elbow straight, grasp hand and slowly bend wrist back until stretch is felt. Hold 30 seconds. Switch Arms.

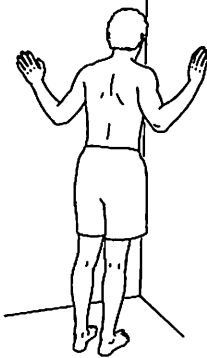
SHOULDER - 72 ROM: Posterior Capsule Stretch

Gently pull on forward elbow with other hand until stretch is felt in shoulder. Hold 30 seconds. Switch Arms.

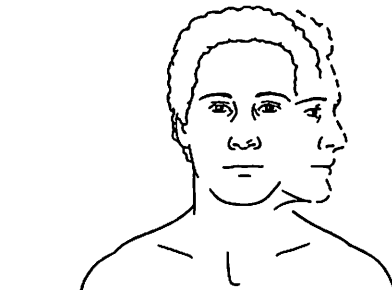


CERVICAL SPINE - 24 Flexibility: Corner Stretch

Standing in corner or doorway with hands just above shoulder level and feet comfortably from corner, lean forward until a comfortable stretch is felt across chest. Hold 30 seconds.

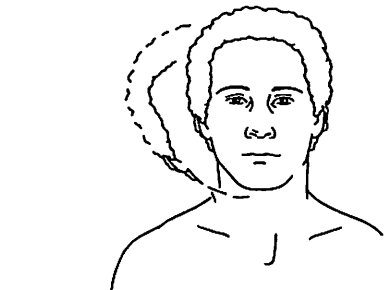


CERVICAL SPINE - 1 AROM: Neck Rotation



Turn head slowly to look over one shoulder, then the other. Hold each position 3 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

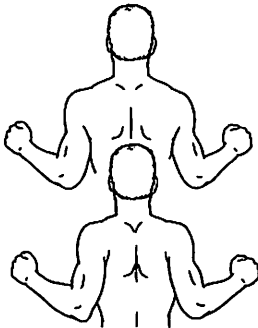
CERVICAL SPINE - 2 AROM: Lateral Neck Flexion



Slowly tilt head toward one shoulder, then the other. Hold each position 3 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

SHOULDER - 103 Scapular Retraction: Elbow Flexion (Standing)

With elbows bent to 90°, pinch shoulder blades together.



Repeat for 2 sets of 15

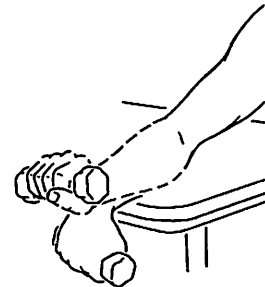
CERVICAL SPINE - 22A Strengthening: Shoulder Shrug

Shrug shoulders up, back, then down. Do not go forward. Do 2 sets of 15.



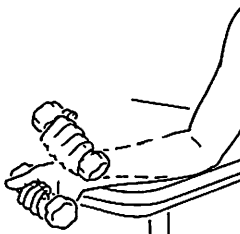
HAND - 64 Wrist Extension: Resisted

With palm down, ___ pound weight in hand, bend wrist up. Return slowly. Do 2 sets of 15 each arm.



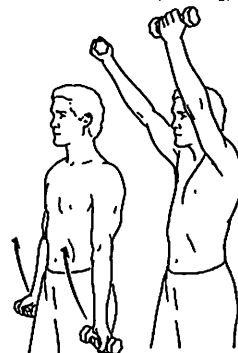
HAND - 63 Wrist Flexion: Resisted

With palm up, ___ pound weight in hand, bend wrist up. Return slowly. Perform 2 sets of 15.



SHOULDER - 64 Progressive Resisted: Flexion (Standing)

With thumb pointed toward ceiling, raise arms forward. Stop at shoulder height (not as pictured). Keep elbows straight.



SHOULDER - 67 Progressive Resisted: Abduction (Standing)

Raise arms out from sides with thumbs pointed toward the ceiling. Repeat for 2 sets of 15

