



Greetings All! Our staff at Lakewood Physical Therapy hopes that you have had a wonderful, fun filled summer! With fall quickly approaching us, it's time to think about protecting aches and pains from activities such as raking leaves. Here are some ways to prevent back pain while maintaining your fall duties.

Warm up - Take a 5 to 10 minute brisk walk to warm up your muscles.

Choose the Right Rake – Use a rake that is proportionate to your body size. Using a rake that is too long or too short will cause you to curb your posture and strain your muscles. Consider the rake width, a narrow rake may make the weight of the leaves lighter but they can also make the job longer. A wide rake gathers more leaves but can also put more strain on your back.

Watch Your Posture - Like any exercise, proper form is crucial. Muscle pain and strain occurs when you put your body in awkward positions and try to contract or extend muscles in these positions. To maintain proper posture while raking, keep legs slightly bent, your weight centered, and reach with your arms and not your back. After every 20 minutes of raking, stand up, place hands on your hips and gently stretch into a back bend for a few seconds especially before lifting anything. Don't extend to the point of causing pain.

Switch Hands frequently - You fatigue your muscles with repetitive motion. Switch your lead arm repeatedly while raking to prevent, or eliminate, muscle exhaustion

Bend With Your Knees - When lifting leaves keep your back straight and bend with your knees and hips, not your back.

Make the piles small to decrease the weight.

Use a Tarp - Leaves are lightweight and can easily be moved on a tarp. Rake leaves onto the tarp and pull one end of the tarp to move the leaves to your preferred location. Doing this can save your back constant bending over to pick up piles of leaves.

Drink Plenty of Water - Muscles need water to function at best. When you maintain your body's water levels during use, you allow your muscles to work with each other properly and support your physical activity.

Wear Good Shoes - Wear shoes with good arch support and skid-resistant soles. Standing on your feet and raking all day can put a lot of stress on your feet and legs. Proper foot and arch support can stop some of that stress from reaching your back, and skid-resistant soles can minimize the risk of slipping on wet leaves and falling.

Consider a Leaf Blower – There are lightweight gas and electric leaf blowers on the market that are hand held or can be worn like a backpack. Blowing the leaves into one large pile or onto a tarp can save time as well as energy.

Wear Gloves – Give your hands a break and wear gloves to prevent from getting blisters.

Take Frequent Breaks - Taking your time will make it less likely for injuries to occur. Pushing yourself to the point of exhaustion can cause you to get sloppy with posture and lifting techniques, setting you up for injury.

<http://www.easyrest.com/why-us/adjustable-bed-benefits/back-pain/back-pain-while-raking-leaves>

We would like to remind you about our referral prize giveaways once again! Those who refer the most family and friends to our facility will receive two FREE Regal Cinema movie tickets. We value your confidence in our care and would like to show our appreciation. Please make sure to let us know when you have referred someone to us so we can personally thank you.

Lakewood Physical Therapy hopes you have a happy and healthy fall! Take care and well wishes in the mean time!