

Spring has Sprung!

Gardening dos and don'ts and how to avoid those aches and pains



It's finally here! We've waited months for that perfect 70 degree sunny weather. For some, gardening season is just like Christmas. You may be chompin' at the bit to get out and do some much needed yard work and gardening but here are some things to think about before you dive, or "dig" right in.

Gardening is a very physical activity. It's not a contact sport, like football, by any means but it should require a small warm up before beginning. Consider taking a brisk walk and/or doing some stretching before and after each gardening session.

Here are a few ergonomic tidbits to keep in mind:

-) Try to keep your work close to you, minimizing your reaching
-) Use kneepads to protect your knees
-) Alternate positions and rotate activities frequently (sitting and standing positions at 30 minute intervals)
-) Try to avoid repetitive motions, especially with your wrists and elbows (i.e. pulling weeds; try using a weeder or other helpful tools)
-) Use the proper ergonomic tools that fit to YOUR body. Always use thinner gloves (even if they wear faster) that fit correctly to increase hand coordination and power grip.

-) Listen to your body. Take a break when you feel like you are fatiguing and let pain be your guide to not overdo it.
-) Don't forget to drink water and stay hydrated. Ice your knees, back, shoulders, etc. as needed after working.

Some of the most common injuries with gardening would include:

-) Neck Pain
-) Shoulder Tendonitis
-) Low Back Pain
-) Lateral Epicondylitis (pain on the outside of the elbow)
-) Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
-) Pre-patellar bursitis (pain in the kneecap)

If you begin to experience any ongoing pain after your gardening sessions, you may want to consult with your primary care physician about the ways physical therapy can resolve your symptoms.