

GETTING READY FOR GARDENING AND TIPS ON GARDENING SMART

BREAKING UP ACTIVITY: Preview your job. Plan how you can break it up so that you can do things in different positions. Do some kneeling activity (weeding) for 15-20 min, seated weeding (raised beds, planters, pruning, etc) for 15-20 min, then some standing activity (pruning) for 15-20 min, kneeling activity 15-20 min. Repeat. When kneeling try to alternate knees that you are on and when raking/shoveling switch leg that is forward to break up the strain. Stretch frequently. Use a garden basket or bucket instead of wheel barrow so that you have to empty it more frequently. Drink lots of water so you have to get up and walk into the bathroom!

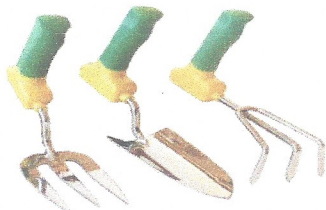
STRETCHES: Break up your activity See attached hand out on this topic.

BASIC BODY MECHANICS: Be as close to your work as possible to help maintain neutral positioning. Kneel or use seat vs. bending forward at waist. Keep straight with your work, try to avoid bending or twisting. You have better leverage if you can push instead of pull. Do not fill your wheel barrow to overflowing! Fill just half way so that it is not so heavy and awkward to move and so that you have to get up and move/change positions more frequently. Choose tools that allow your body to remain in as neutral a position as possible. (See Ergonomic tools below and attached hand out titled body mechanics)

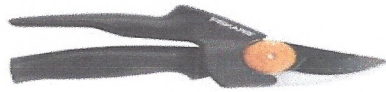


ERGONOMIC TOOLS: Now readily available in most garden stores and online. (Henry's, Home Depot, Amazon)

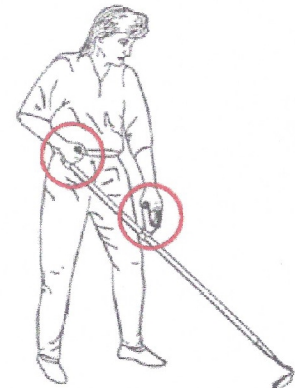
- Check the weight: Tools that feel too heavy will become tiring and place extra strain on muscles and joints with repetitive use.
- Test for balance and sensitivity: You want the weight of the tool to be evenly distributed or through the working end. Spring loaded or self adjusting tools with ergonomic handles reduce pressure on joints and muscles. They have special tools for small hands and L handed users (Felco).
- Grip size varies: The grip should feel soft and comfortable. Over large grips can tire muscles and joints. Non-slip grips help prevent blisters. Gel grips flex to provide cushioning and aids to reduce muscle fatigue and cramping (OXO Gel-e tools).
- Look for tools that allow the wrist & hand to remain in a neutral position (Radius, Easy-Grip).



- Look for pruners that maintain sharpness and ratchet type mechanism, rather than the usual spring used to open and close the blades. The ratchet mechanism assists cutting through the plant by moving the blade in small increments without releasing, which multiplies your hand power significantly reducing stress to the hands and wrist. (Fiskar's PowerGear was awarded the "Ease of Use" commendation from The Arthritis Foundation)



- You can usually get many tools with different lengths shafts(shovels, hoes, pick axes). 48" instead of the normal 36" allows body to remain more vertical and reduces strain on the low back.
- Different handle or grip types allow you to hold the tool optimally for better control and wrist position.(Radius Pro Grip has an "O" handle that allows you to hold the hand at all times w/two hands in a safe and comfortable position) Ergonomic D-grips that mound mid-way down the tool's handle gives leverage to the forward hand. T-grips at the upper end of the handle gives pushing & pulling control to the back hand. These grips also allow the wrist to remain in a near neutral position and allows the trunk to remain more upright, decreasing strain on the low back by about 10%.
- Fiberglass shafts are still durable but lighter for use.



- Garden kneelers, stools & rockers decrease stress on knees, hips and low back. (Step2 Garden Hopper, Yard Butler Garden Kneeler, Vortex Garden Rocker)



Make sure you get and use the right tool for the job! HAVE FUN!!!!

STRETCHES

Created By: Shauna Coleman P.T.

BACK - 44 Backward Bend (Standing)

Arch backward to make hollow of back deeper. Hold 15 seconds.

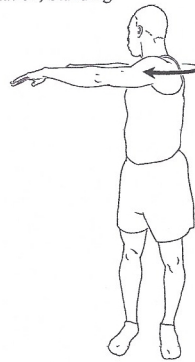
Repeat 5 times per set. Do 1 sets per session. Do 3 sessions per day.



UPPER-MID BACK - 10 Rotation, Standing

Stand, arms extended forward. Twist to one side looking that direction as far as possible. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat to other side.

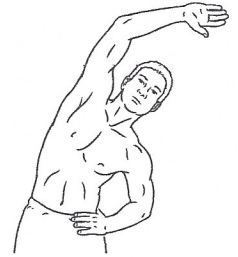
Repeat 5 times per session. Do 3 sessions per day.



BACK - 86 Thoracolumbar Side-Bend: Single Arm (Standing)

Reach over head to other side with right arm until stretch is felt. Hold 15 seconds. Relax.

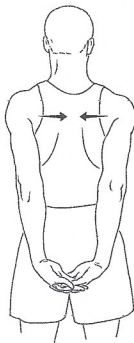
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CHEST - 2 Pectoral Stretch With Shoulder Blade Squeeze

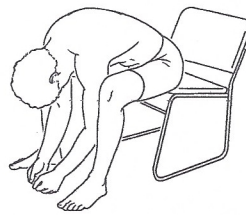
Stand, hands clasped behind back. Squeeze shoulder blades. Move only shoulder blades. Keep hands close to body. Do not shrug shoulders. Hold 15 seconds.

Repeat 5 times per session. Do 5 sessions per day.



BACK - 17 Lower Back Stretch (Sitting)

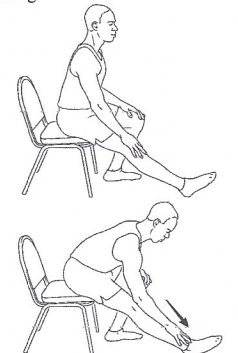
Sit in chair with knees spread apart. Bend forward to floor. A comfortable stretch should be felt in lower back. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat 5 times per set. Do 1 sets per session. Do 5 sessions per day.



HAMSTRING - 23 Chair Sitting

Sit at edge of seat, spine straight, one leg extended. Put a hand on each thigh and bend forward from the hip, keeping spine straight. Allow hand on extended leg to reach toward toes. Support upper body with other arm. Hold 15 seconds.

Repeat 5 times per session. Do 3 sessions per day.



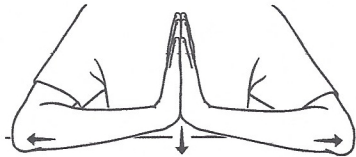
HAND / FINGER / WRIST - 6 Thumb Adductor

Using other hand, pull thumb up from thigh toward wrist so that stretch is felt in palm between thumb and forefinger. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat 5 times per session. Do 3 sessions per day.



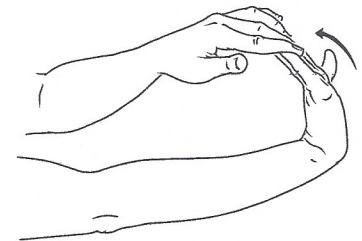
HAND - 16 Wrist Flexor Stretch

Sitting with elbows on table and palms together, slowly lower wrists to table until stretch is felt. Keep palms together throughout the stretch. Hold 15 seconds. Relax. Repeat 5 times per set. Do 1 sets per session. Do 3 sessions per day.



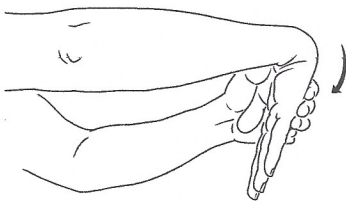
HAND / FINGER / WRIST - 14 Wrist Flexors

Elbow straight, palm down. Grasp fingers with other hand and slowly bend wrist backward. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat 5 times per session. Do 3 sessions per day.



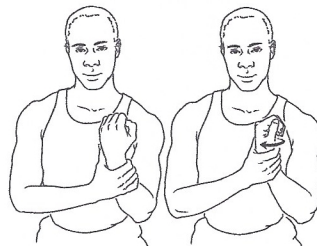
HAND / FINGER / WRIST - 21 Wrist Extensors

Elbow straight, palm down. Place other hand with thumb on underside of wrist and fingers on back of hand. Slowly bend wrist down until stretch is felt on top of forearm. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat 5 times per session. Do 5 sessions per day.



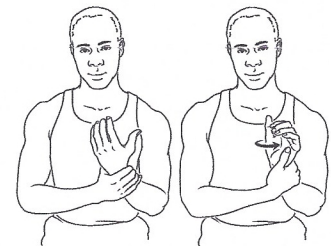
HAND / FINGER / WRIST - 23 Wrist Pronators Forearm Inward Rotation

With one elbow tucked into rib cage, use other hand to turn arm outward. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat 5 times per session. Do 5 sessions per day.



HAND / FINGER / WRIST - 24 Wrist Supinators Forearm Outward Rotation

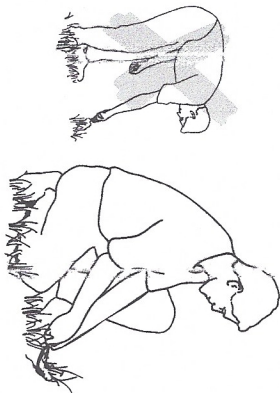
With one elbow tucked into rib cage, use other hand to turn arm inward. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat 5 times per session. Do 5 sessions per day.



BODY MECHANICS

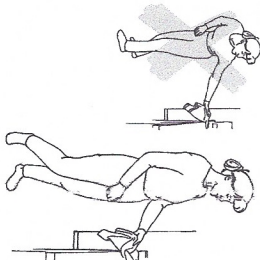
Created By: Shauna Coleman P.T.

ADL - 27
Gardening - Weeding / Planting



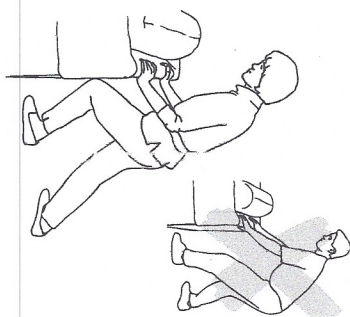
Squat or kneel. Knee pads may be helpful.

MOVEMENT - 2
Avoid Twisting



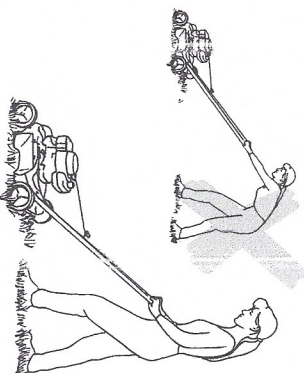
Avoid twisting or bending back. Pivot around using foot movements, and bend at knees if needed when reaching for articles.

MOVEMENT - 12
Pushing / Pulling



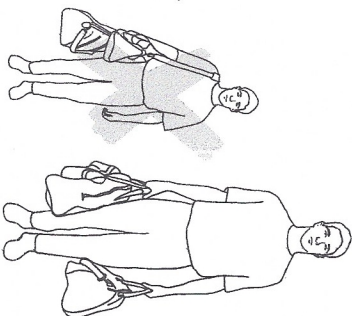
Pushing is preferable to pulling. Keep back in proper alignment, and use leg muscles to do the work.

ADL - 23
Gardening - Mowing



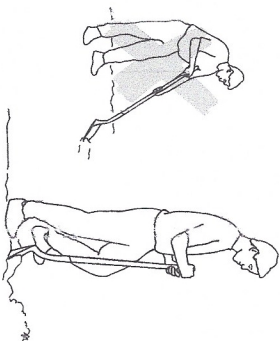
Keep arms close to sides and walk with lawn mower.

LIFTING - 6
Carrying In-gage



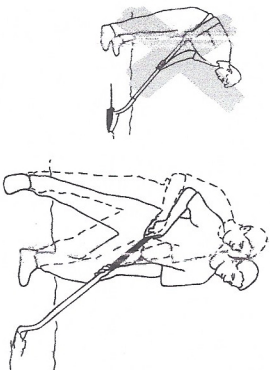
Distribute weight evenly on both sides. Use a cart whenever possible. Do not twist trunk. Move body as a unit.

ADL - 24
Gardening - Digging



Insert tool vertically into soil and step on blade, then lift out small amounts.

ADL - 25
Gardening - Shoveling



Push from end of handle, shifting body weight from back leg to front leg. Keep knees bent and avoid twisting your back.

ADL - 26
Gardening - Raking



Move close to area to be raked. Use arm movements to do the work. Keep back straight and avoid twisting.

LIFTING - 11
Lifting Principles

- Maintain proper posture and head alignment.
- Slide object as close as possible before lifting.
- Move obstacles out of the way.
- Test before lifting: ask for help if too heavy.
- Tighten stomach muscles without holding breath.
- Use smooth movements; do not jerk.
- Use legs to do the work, and pivot with feet.
- Distribute the work load symmetrically and close to the center of trunk.
- Push instead of pull whenever possible.