

## **GARDENING WITHOUT HURTING YOURSELF**

Pain and injuries caused by gardening can really affect your summer. How should one practice this leisure activity without suffering?

Generally, injuries are caused by one of the following situations:

1. inadequate warm-up
2. a sustained position or activity
3. too many activities done within the same day
4. lack of planning

Here are some tips to prevent problems and to allow you to spend a great summer.

1. ***Warm-up*** :

Walk on the spot until you start to warm up. Do some stretching exercises for the neck, shoulders, wrists, back and legs. Hold the stretches for periods of 20 to 30 seconds and repeat them 3 times before and after each activity. To learn which exercises to do, consult a physiotherapist or the Canadian Physiotherapy Association website ([www.physiotherapy.ca](http://www.physiotherapy.ca); look for “stretching exercises for gardening”). Before starting a repetitive movement, you can practice the same movement without resistance or any tools in your hands. This will warm up the specific muscles which will be used during the activity.

2. ***Move***:

Never stay more than 5 minutes in a static position. Moving from one activity to another will allow different parts of your body to stay limber.

3. ***Take your time***:

Take a break when you start to be tired and spread your projects over many days or weeks instead of doing everything in the same week-end.

4. ***Be organised***:

Get everything that you need ready in order to do your work safely and comfortably. Get the proper tools so that you don't have to work harder than you have to. Plan the order of your various tasks to prepare your work environment properly. Ask for help for all tasks that are too demanding.

If you still develop symptoms after gardening despite following the above advice, do not hesitate to contact a physiotherapist.

Happy gardening!