

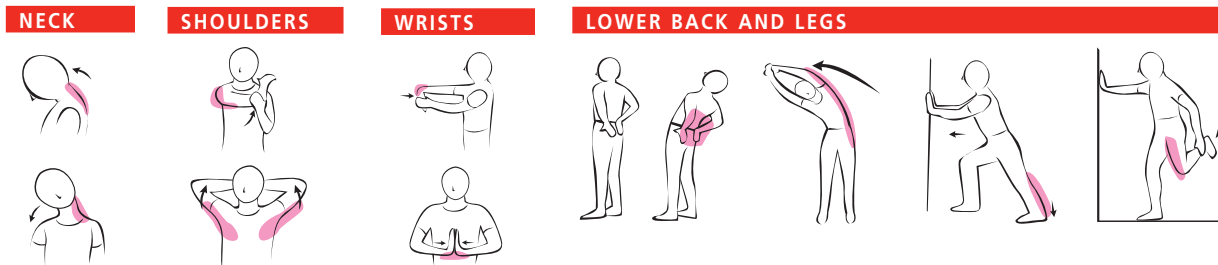


PHYSIOTHERAPY FACTS – GARDENING

These gardening safety tips have been prepared for to you by the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) to help you have a healthy and active gardening season. CPA recommends gardeners take the **S.M.A.R.T. approach** (**S**tretch, **M**ove, **A**dd it up, **R**educe Strain, **T**alk to a physiotherapist) to ensure you get the most out of your gardening season:

STRETCH – BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER GARDENING

Stretching – as a warm-up, as a break during repetitive movement, and as a cool-down – helps you to move easily, keeps your muscles flexible and relaxed, your joints mobile and relieves tension and strain.



When stretching, remember:

- Movements should be slow and controlled, you should feel a gentle stretch of the muscle – stretching should never be painful;
- Once you feel a stretch, hold the position for 10 – 15 seconds. Do not bounce or jerk; and repeat each stretch two or three times.

MOVE – TODAY FOR TOMORROW

Get moving. Keep moving. Stay moving. Through the seasons. Through life. Gardening is an excellent way to get your whole body in motion.

- Section off your garden to find your “easy zone” – that permits your body to work in a comfortable posture - and try to do your work within this “zone”;
- Activity outside your “easy zone” may cause sprains and strains. Avoid “out of zone” postures by:
 - Moving with your work – keep your work in front of and close to your body to avoid reaching and twisting;
 - Lift with your knees bent, keeping your back straight.

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S This information sheet is part of the CPA's **S.M.A.R.T.** approach to your mobility (focusing on **S**tretching, **M**oving, **A**dding it up, **R**educing Strain and **T**alking to a physiotherapist). The information provided is intended for general use and is not meant to substitute for the professional, personal assessment your physiotherapist offers.

1 Cette fiche de renseignements fait partie du programme de l'ACP « cinq points pour assurer votre liberté de mouvement » (**1. Étirez-vous; 2. Bougez; 3. Additionnez les minutes; 4. Réduisez la fatigue; 5. Consultez un physiothérapeute**). Ces renseignements sont fournis à titre général seulement et ne prétendent pas remplacer l'évaluation professionnelle, personnalisée offerte par votre physiothérapeute.

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ADD IT UP – AN HOUR IS POWER

To *gain* mobility, plan activities throughout your day that keep you moving for periods of at least 10 minutes. To *maintain* your mobility, make every movement count. Add up all you do in a day and aim for a minimum of 60 minutes of *movement* every day.

Be realistic! Your body can only perform at the level of effort and endurance it is accustomed to. For maximum benefit, physiotherapists recommend regular physical activity and stretching to maintain your physical mobility throughout the year.

- **Work within your physical strength.** Standard safe lifting loads are 64 lbs. (about 29 kg) for middle-aged men and 28 lbs. (about 13 kg) for women, but a ‘safe’ lift is less than this when the load is difficult to reach or an awkward shape;
- **Pace yourself!** Take a break, spread tasks over a period of time, and take time to recover between projects;
- **Rotate tasks.** Avoid over-use injuries by doing different activities throughout the day to reduce strain on major muscle groups and joints.

REDUCE STRAIN – USE TOOLS THAT WORK FOR YOU

Gardening tools and equipment are meant to ease work, not cause additional strain. Take measures to fit the tools to you, not you to the tools.

- **Keep your supplies within easy reach** – consider using an apron with pockets;
- **Use tools to reduce work** - a wheelbarrow to transport supplies, an extended handle to reduce the reach, and tools with good grips or ergonomic handles.

TALK TO A PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Physiotherapists are healthcare professionals who help people of all ages and lifestyles gain and maintain their desired level of active living and physical mobility. With their applied knowledge and understanding of the human body in action, physiotherapists are able to help you to increase your mobility, relieve pain, build strength and improve balance and cardiovascular function. Physiotherapists not only treat injuries, they also teach you how to prevent the onset of pain or injury that can limit your activity.

How do I find a physiotherapist?

Finding a physiotherapist may vary from province to province. Here are some suggestions:

- Check the yellow pages of your local telephone book for listings of physiotherapists and physiotherapy clinics. You can make an appointment with a physiotherapist directly anywhere in Canada;
- Ask for a recommendation from your family doctor. While a direct referral is not necessary, your physician may be able to suggest a physiotherapist for your particular concern. Further, while many physiotherapy services are covered by provincial health care plans, Workers Compensation plans and private insurance, some insurance plans require a doctor’s referral for reimbursement.
- Visit the web site of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association at www.physiotherapy.ca to access our “Find A Physiotherapist” directory and to find out more information about physiotherapy. The CPA web site can also link you to resources for finding physiotherapists through provincial association branches and regulatory colleges.