



## Gardening Ergonomics

Gardening is enjoyable, but it can be hard work. In order to prevent gardening related injury it is important to practice safe gardening habits. Here are some suggestions to keep you gardening healthy and happy!!

**\*Warm Up-** get your body moving before you start digging. A warm up can be as simple as a short walk around your garden or performing some simple stretches. "Cold" muscles are more likely to be injured, so take a few minutes to warm up.

**\*Remember Proper Lifting Techniques-**Lower back injuries can be caused by repetitive actions or a traumatic event that includes incorrect lifting of a heavy object. Even picking up a lightweight object can lead to injury if proper body mechanics are not utilized.

- ✓ Lift with your legs, not your back-make sure to bend your knees, not at your waist when lifting any object
- ✓ Hold the object close to your body, not at arms' length away
- ✓ Maintain a straight (neutral) spine-do not bend your lower back
- ✓ Lift with a friend. Always ask for help when lifting heavy objects

**\*Avoid Repetitive or Sustained Positions-**Keep moving. Rotate through gardening jobs instead of doing the same activity for an extended period. Take a break every 20-30 minutes to stretch, take a short walk, or change activities.

## Garden Safety Tips

**Wear Sunscreen or Protective Clothing-**Prevent skin damage from the sun by applying sunscreen 10-15 minutes prior to going out to garden. Wear a wide brimmed hat and lightweight long sleeve shirt. Garden in the early morning or evening, outside of the hours when it is the hottest outside.

**Wear Gloves-**Gloves help protect your hands and keeps dirt exposure to a minimum.

**Wash, Wash, Wash-**After coming in from the garden make sure to leave your shoes at the door and wash your hands thoroughly. Remember to wash all the produce you harvest prior to preparing and consuming. It is good practice to wash garden tools as well.