

Q: What can I do to protect my body while gardening?

A: It's time to welcome spring and get into your garden! Keep your back, muscles, and joints protected and pain free by following a few simple steps. Always begin with a brief warm-up routine, making sure to stretch your back, legs, shoulders, and wrists. A good warm up includes the following stretches: 1) Place your heel on a step and lean forward until you feel a good stretch in the back of your leg. Hold for 15 seconds, and then repeat with the other leg. 2) Interlace your fingers, and raise your arms over your head so your palms are facing the sky. Lean to one side and hold for 10 seconds, then the other. Do this three times. 3) Wrap your arms around yourself and rotate your trunk to one side and hold for 10 seconds, then repeat on the other side. After stretching you will be ready to begin working in the garden of your dreams! While digging in the dirt be sure to mind your posture, bend with your knees, and change positions frequently. If you have spent more than ten minutes kneeling over, take a quick break to stand and stretch; then you can get back to work! When you are finished gardening take time to repeat the stretches that you did to warm up and drink a big glass of water to help you stay hydrated. With these simple additions to your gardening routine, you will have a safe and pain-free gardening season!

*Written by Dr. Sarah Lloyd
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