

ERGO Being's Gardening Tips

When it's time to get outdoors and enjoy your free time remember to practice good ergonomics and proper postures. Discomfort is controllable so change those habits and attitudes to be a happier, healthier, and more relaxed gardener! Be conscientious about potentially awkward positions and movements and avoid twisting and bending for extended periods. Ergonomics is about making the fit between humans and their environment... and that includes tasks such as gardening.



Here are some top ERGOhealthy tips for Gardening:

- Use the right tool for the job
 1. Keep tools sharp and in good working condition, they'll require less effort to use
 2. Use long handled tools when appropriate; reduce over reaching and stooping
 3. Use the correct tool for the job
 4. Ladders need to be appropriate for the area they'll be used in
 5. Practice safe practices when using power tools; be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards
 6. Try using a garden cart
 7. Make sure to put your tools away when you are finished and store them securely
- Make sure tools are fitted properly for your hands
 1. Handle diameter – too thick may cause wrist fatigue
 2. Indentations – encourage a neutral position (thumbs up, wrist straight)
 3. Pistol-Grip and Telescopic handles require less energy to use and promote proper wrist positioning
 4. Curved handles provide increased leverage
 5. Weight of tool should be appropriate for the task
- Proper protective gear is a must
 1. Long sleeve shirts and full length pants
 2. Form-fitting gloves; too much padding interferes with your grip
 3. Correct footwear for the task (be aware of uneven ground, slip and trip hazards)
 4. Protective eyewear for both sun protection and debris
 5. Knee pads
 6. Sunscreen
- Body Postures
 1. Work within a comfortable space for your body
 2. Stand upright, feet shoulder width apart
 3. Lift with your legs not your back, squat and bend your knees using your strong leg muscles to reduce potential back strain
 4. Elbows below your heart and keep them partially bent

5. Forearms in a neutral positions, your thumbs should be pointing up not down
 6. Don't over reach; use long handled tools or ladders when needed
 7. Face your work to reduce twisting
 8. Use two hands to carry items; get help for heavy loads, or make multiple trips; test the weight of an item before lifting it
 9. Use a light grasp to hold objects, tight squeezing may cause fatigue
 10. Work at levels below your shoulders whenever possible
 11. Keep your back straight
 12. Squat versus bending down
- More helpful tips
1. Gardening should be enjoyable take your time and relax
 2. Plan your work so you'll be out early in the morning or evening when it's cooler. Moist soil is easier to dig in.
 3. This is exercise and you should warm-up in advance get some stretching in before and after
 4. Take breaks, even just a few minutes each hour is helpful; stretch during your breaks
 5. Stay hydrated and make sure to eat so that you have plenty of "fuel" to work with
 6. Rotate your tasks regularly
 7. Start out slowly; build your way up
 8. Hire a professional if you are not comfortable operating a specific piece of equipment
 9. Practice healthy habits to stay conditioned all year round
 10. And of course, take time to smell the roses, or any other plant that you love!