



Spring in to Spring....

Blue skies and sunshine are upon us! This means we are able to get back out in the garden and catch up on all the jobs that need doing. Being in the garden and being more physically active is great, but we need to take care and make sure we don't injure ourselves, especially our backs. Following these simple steps can help you to remain injury free and enjoy your time in the garden.

- **Warm up first**-Start off with lighter jobs first, this will ease your body in to it and decrease the chance of muscle strain.
- **Dress appropriately** – Wear clothes that are not tight fitting as this will restrict your movement.
- **Make sure you are using the correct tools**-If you've been using the same gardening tools for years, perhaps it's time for some new ergonomic-handled tools. Using ergonomic tools can help reduce repetitive injuries.
- **Twist both ways**-Turning to plant into pots can create strain on the lower back. Try to twist to both sides. Turning yourself around can help to balance yourself. If you have to use a ladder for any of your gardening tasks, make sure you are always facing it. Avoid leaning or reaching, move the ladder regularly, make sure your shoulders, hips and knees all point in the same direction, this will help balance your body.
- **Bend with your knees**-Try not to bend from the hips. Bending from your hips puts pressure through your muscles and back and can lead to muscle strain, always bend with your knees.
- **Maintain a good gardening posture**-Keep your back straight and try to work within comfortable reach of your body. Focus tasks as much as possible in the area between your knees and shoulders and within arms length.
- **Keep your plants close to you**-keeping your pots or the things you lift close to your chest means you put the weight of the object down your spine as opposed to into your muscles.
- **Take a break**-It is advised you spend no more than 20-30 minutes on any one thing and take regular breaks, have a cup of tea and enjoy a well deserved break!
- **After you finish**-Stretch, cooling down after your session in the garden is as important as warming up before. Slowly bring your stretches to the point of tension but not pain.

BACK CARE GARDENING TIPS!

1. WARM UP FIRST

Try doing some simple stretches to loosen off your muscles and joints before starting. Make sure you always start with lighter jobs first, this will ease your body in to it and decrease the chance of muscle strain.



2. DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Wear clothes that are not tight fitting as this will restrict your movement.



3. CHOOSE THE CORRECT TOOLS

Using wheel barrows and ergonomic tools helps reduce repetitive injuries. Remember to always maintain your tools this helps to reduce the strain on your body.

4. USE THE CORRECT TECHNIQUE

When digging alternate the foot you are using and only lift a small amount at a time. Bend your knees when lifting and keep pots close to your chest. Alternate knees when kneeling. Try using a knee pad or a gardening stool.



5. VARY YOUR TASKS

Avoid staying in one position for too long as this puts extra strain on certain parts of your body. Try to alternate between digging, weeding, planting and watering.



Benefits of Gardening...

Research has shown that spending time outdoors is good for our bodies and our minds.

Gardening is a great activity to help keep you physically fit. Gardening works all your major muscle groups, activities such as raking, weeding and trimming can improve your overall fitness levels, burning around 300 calories an hour. Being outdoors especially in the summer months helps you get a healthy dose of Vitamin D from the sunlight.

As well as physical benefits, gardening can also help improve your mental health.

Gardening is a therapeutic activity, having a garden gives us a place to relax. When gardening our minds are focused on the task at hand helping to give you peace and contentment, also helping to improve your mood.

Gardening like any hobby, can help you connect with others who share the same interest, by joining a gardening group or a community allotment, it is the perfect way to make new friends. Gardening is a fun activity that is suitable for all ages, making it perfect for all the family to enjoy together.

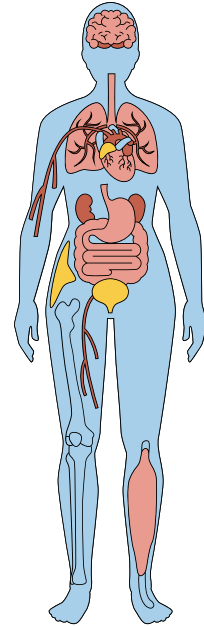
Why not give it a go and enjoy the many benefits!

Benefits of Gardening

- Gardening can help reduce the stress hormone cortisol.
- Gardening is exercise, gardening burns about 300 calories an hour.
- One study has revealed that daily gardening can help to reduce dementia by 36%
- Soil contains a natural antidepressant that makes us feel happier.
- Gardening groups can provide opportunities for social interaction and connection.

5 Fun Facts!

- Beards are the fastest growing hairs on the human body.
- Everyone has a unique smell, except identical twins, they smell the same.
- Every individual has a unique tongue print.
- The body can produce enough heat in just half an hour to boil water.
- Your mouth produces approximately one litre of saliva each day.



Date for your Diary...

Easter opening hours:

The clinic will be closed on:
Friday 18th April & Monday 21st April.
Happy Easter, hope you all have a "Cracking" time! x

