



**STEPS TO
SUCCESS**
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Ergonomic Tips for the Garden

Gardening is a popular leisure activity that has therapeutic value! Occupational therapists can suggest body friendly techniques for gardening and adaptation of tools to assist gardeners with this occupation. These strategies can greatly reduce discomfort and fatigue and reduce gardening injuries.



Gardening can be demanding on the body. Try stretching exercises as a warm up!

Roll your shoulders, stretch your wrists! For a back exercise, lie down on your back, then pull both knees to your chest.



Instead of lifting whole bags of mulch, soil, and fertilizer, divide them into smaller loads.

Use your leg muscles and not your back when lifting bags.



Avoid twisting and reaching while planting or pruning.

Keep your feet firmly on the ground and use a reacher or pull branches down.



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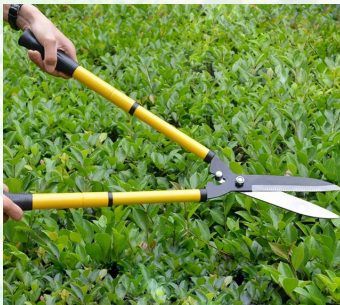
Use a two-wheeled garden cart to move materials. They are more stable than a wheelbarrow.

Tightly gripping or pinching a tool for a long time can lead to swelling in your hands and arms. Try to avoid bending of wrists too.



Pruners and clippers with spring-action self-opening features can help if you have weak grip.

Garden tools that have padded, built up, or curved handles are beneficial for arthritis to protect the joints in your hands from pressure and strain.



Use long-handled garden tools to decrease the need to extend or bend the body beyond your reach.



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The repetitive stress of kneeling or hunching over for a long time can cause back strain and knee pain.

Use a kneeler seat or sit while gardening to decrease stress on your back, knees, and hips.



Take rest breaks around every 15 minutes and stop working before you get too tired.

Move around and alternate garden tasks to avoid putting extra stress on one part of the body.



If your muscles are sore after gardening, take a rest! Having a hot bath or shower can also relax muscles.

Remember the RICE method if your muscles are still sore and aching.

Rest
Ice
Compression
Elevation