

# Summer Activities

## Back to Health Wellness Centre

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## Yard Work

With the summer weather inevitably comes the summer yard work. Gardening, raking, clipping and mowing, it all has to get done, right? Injuries while doing yard work are probably more common than you think. Here are a few tips to help you stay healthy.

\* Before doing anything — even any pre-garden stretches — **take a walk** around your yard a few times to loosen up. Or, take a brief bike ride around the block to help you limber up.

\* Be cautious about the amount of strain placed on your lower back. *Let your arms and legs do the work* when pulling a rake or pushing a hoe or shovel. When weeding or planting, sit on the ground or kneel on a foam pad.

\* Do easier tasks first. As you progress, periodically switch to other jobs to avoid overusing one muscle group. You should also alternate difficult tasks with less taxing ones.

\* Instead of bending at the waist to pick up a bag of mulch, pull it up on your thigh close to your body and then stand up. Your thighs can take more strain than your back.

\* Assume a **scissors stance** while raking by placing your right foot forward and left foot back, says the American Chiropractic Association. After a few minutes, reverse this position, putting your left foot forward and your right foot back. Periodically reverse the position of your hands on the rake.

\* Pace yourself. *Work for 15 to 30 minutes and take a stretching break.* If you tend to lose track of time while gardening, try taking your kitchen timer with you to remind you to take a break.

\* Keep hydrated. Water should be consumed every 30 minutes, and on warm days, every 15 minutes.

\* Don't try to do everything all in one day. Break long sessions into 2 or 3 hour time periods and allow yourself several days for larger projects.

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### Special points of interest:

- Maintain a 'neutral' alignment with your body when performing activities.
- If you do have discomfort with an activity, **ice for 15 minutes.**
- If you injure any body part, feel free to have us look at it!

### STRETCH OF THE MONTH: *The Cat-Camel:* Perfect for summer activities!

Place your knees shoulder width apart, align your hips so that your back and legs are at a right angle. Place your hands in front of you with your shoulders positioned so that your back and arms are at a right angle. Ensure you don't lock your elbows. **Camel stretch:** bend your back up towards the sky while rounding your neck and head toward your chest. Make sure your abdominal muscles are engaged and that your upper back is higher than your rounded shoulders. Your pelvis should naturally tilt toward your arms. Feel release in your lower back as you breathe in and out. Slowly move into the **Cat stretch:** arch your back toward the ground, pull your shoulders back and bring your chin up toward the sky. As you slowly and fluidly arch your back, your pelvis should tilt out away from you and your buttocks should rise into the air. Open your chest, engage your abdominals and breathe. Repeat 5 times.



## Maintaining 'Neutral' (relaxed) Body alignment for all Sports!

We go about our daily activities and do not think about the way in which our body is positioned while we engage in different sporting activities, gardening, painting, cleaning. We at Back to Health would like each of you to focus on the way in which your body is positioned while you go through your day. This position is known as 'neutral' alignment.



Can you keep your body in 'neutral' alignment?

If you take your wrist and place it in the horizontal position (straight), this is known as NEUTRAL alignment. Now take the wrist and bend it back a little. In this new position you will probably feel some pressure in the wrist, pulling on muscles in the front side of your arm and tightness in the back side of the forearm. You have in

this position compressed the carpal joints—can cause restrictions in the them, shortened some muscles and lengthened some other muscles.

If you leave your wrist/hand in this position you can aggravate some joints and muscles. Think of this the next time you use a mouse or keyboard!

Try to think of this with all your body joints when you engage in any of the summer activities you are planning to do. What is your body position like when you: garden, weed, mow the lawn, kayak, play golf, baseball, tennis, hike, ultimate, football, soccer, bike, run, swim, roller blade—the list is endless.

***If you need help understanding the proper body positions—please ask!***

## Useful tips

### Did you know, have you thought of?

1. Lifting a 20 kg weight with your back bent and your knees straight increases the pressure at L3 (the middle of your lumbar spine) by **169%**. Lifting the same object with proper posture (knees bent and back straight) increases pressure by only 73%. source: David J. Magee, *Orthopedic Physical Assessment*
2. That if the length of your golf clubs, tennis racquet, paddle are not fitted properly you can develop shoulder and back injuries?
3. *If your back pack is on incorrectly the load to your neck, mid back and lower back can be increased three fold.*
4. If you roller blade, hike, play ultimate or football, run, cycle with

your hips bent forward incorrectly you place greater stress on your lower back/hips and have to bend your neck backwards to look up—which aggravates the neck/shoulders and upper back.

5. *If you kneel on your knees to garden, weed, renovate you can injure the patella?*

***Please have a look at our newsletter board for tips for summer activities***

## Injured? We Can Help!

Even the most safe and properly prepared person can injure themselves while doing physical labor. If this should happen to you, we can help!

Some of the more common injuries that will occur with summer housework include muscle strains, joint sprains, muscle soreness, and muscle cramping. With all of these types of injuries, it is important to rest and not just 'work through the pain'. If swelling is present, apply ice for short periods of time to help decrease both pain levels and the amount of swelling.

Your treatment plan with us may involve one or more of the following therapies:

- ⇒ Chiropractic Care
- ⇒ Interferential current therapy
- ⇒ Stretching, strengthening, icing
- ⇒ Orthotics
- ⇒ Massage Therapy
- ⇒ Acupuncture
- ⇒ Active Release Technique® (ART)

Not sure which is right for you? Different people respond to treatments in different ways. Talk to a member of our health care team to best determine which methods are right for you!