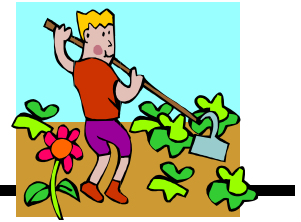


GOLF & GARDEN INJURIES



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GARDENING—HOW IT AFFECTS OUR BODY

It's close to spring, and the lure of getting back in the garden is irresistible. Invigorated by all that balmy fresh air, you spend the first sunny day digging, planting, lifting, and hauling. The next morning, you pay. Your thighs quiver. Your back tightens with every step. Even your wrists are sore when you bend them.

* 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.

* Limit the strain on your back when lifting heavy objects.

* "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. "I will put my gardening tool down, stretch my arms over my head, or I might do some gentle shoulder rolls," says fitness author Pearlman. If you tend to lose track of time while gardening, she recommends taking your kitchen timer with you to remind you to take a break.

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

* Think of gardening as a workout, and schedule 30 minutes to an hour of it at least three times a week. Break longer gardening sessions into two- to three-hour time periods instead of all-day undertakings. The 30 minutes before sunset can be a particularly tranquil time to schedule your "workouts."

* Don't work through aches and pains. If you feel a burning sensation or sharp pains coming on, that is an indication to stop. If you don't, you may risk injury. As is the case with any workout, you should supplement gardening with other forms of exercise for an all-around healthy body. Some recommended ones are: walking, biking, or swimming.

Helpful Hints For Golfing



Many people stop playing golf because of injury.

Interestingly, golfers will spend hundreds of dollars each year on new or improved equipment but will not invest any time or money in the most essential piece of equipment—their body.

Did You Know . . .
That *Golfer's Elbow* is an inflammation of the tendons that allow the wrist to flex or bend. People with this condition are often tender on the inside of their elbow.

1. Bouncing around in a golf cart can further exacerbate back pain, as well as increase the risk of injury, by allowing your body to cool down and your muscles to tighten up between holes. To avoid this, walk the course whenever you can.
2. Bending over incorrectly to tee the ball, replace divots, fix ball marks, lifting a heavy golf bag incorrectly, and kneeling to see the lay of the green, can also cause pain in many parts of the body.
3. Don't limit practice swings to your own turn. To keep your muscles limber and ready, take practice swings throughout the round. This is especially important if you are not walking the course.
4. See a golf pro who can suggest mechanical adjustments to your swing so that your legs, hips and feet absorb some of the stress usually borne by the back.

Tips to Help Reduce the Risk of Injury

A combination of a proper warm-up with stretching exercises along with proper technique are essential in reducing the risk of injury.

A greater range of motion will be achieved with increased flexibility, allowing for a greater power output potential in striking the ball. Muscular endurance will

decrease the likely-hood of muscle fatigue, thereby keeping a constant technique.

Increasing muscle strength will increase the amount of force that can be used to hit the ball.

Lastly, don't forget about proper lifting technique when picking up a golf ball or bag.

Check-out the attached stretching program you can try before your next round of golf.



Massage Therapy and Golfer's Elbow

Golfer's elbow is inflammation of the inside of the elbow where the flexor muscles of the wrist attach to the bone. This condition is most often caused by overuse or repetitive movements. Repeated actions such as striking a hammer, scrubbing pots, and playing golf may cause this condition. In chronic cases there may be calcium deposition in the tendon. The onset is usually gradual and the pain is most often present when the wrist is bent forward. The inside of the elbow may be swollen and red with point

tenderness.

Massage therapy will aid in decreasing inflammation and reducing irritating adhesions. Other benefits include the reduction of muscle spasms, increased range of motion, and circulation. Long-term aims include eliminating scar tissue within the tendon and restoring strength and length of the affected muscles. Recurrences may be prevented by addressing any perpetuating factors.