



## Monthly Wellness Bulletin

### *Keep Gardening Safe and Fun*



Gardening isn't exactly a contact sport, and while you might not need pads or a helmet to participate, you still need to take steps to avoid injury. **Yes, injury.** Believe it or not, it can happen more easily than you think. Like the weekend-warrior athlete, most gardeners overestimate their bodies' abilities and underestimate the task; thereby, ending up in pain and in our office. However, if you prepare (sort of as if you were to stretch before playing a sport) you minimize your chances of experiencing one of these common gardening afflictions:

**Backache** - Too many hours spent bent over while seeding, weeding, watering, and so forth can lead to back injury and pain. So can hauling big sacks of product or wheelbarrows full of soil or rocks. Whether mowing, clipping, raking, planting, pruning, mulching or digging, it is difficult to avoid repetitive bending. The most important rule of thumb 🐜 is to always bend at the knees (not the waist) when the work is beneath you, especially when lifting. Use arm and thigh (leg) muscles to push and pull heavy objects, as opposed to using your back muscles; this too will prevent injury. If a load is too heavy, lighten it and make multiple trips, or recruit someone else to help you lift or pull.

Also consider using long-handled tools so you won't need to bend over as far. Always use slow, deliberate movements instead of rough or jerky ones. Tools with smaller blades that weigh less may also help you avoid straining your muscles. In addition to using the correct posture and tools, **take frequent breaks and walk around and stretch.** Staying in the same position for too long can contribute to a sore back later that night or the next morning. **(Small joints in the posterior part of the spine called facets joints can become sprained/strained causing this inflammation and pain).**

**Repetitive strain** - Repetitive motion of any kind can lead to sore muscles in your arms, hands, shoulders and neck. Prevent this problem by alternating tasks in your garden. Again, remember to stand up and stretch at least every hour, then switch to a new task. Also be sure to set realistic goals for yourself so you don't rush to try to complete a huge project in a short period of time. This, we know, can cause you to over-work and may lead to injuries and pain.

**Blistering** - The rough handles on many gardening tools are the perfect recipe for a few major blisters after hours spent holding and digging. A good pair of gloves designed specifically for gardening will allow you to work for hours while remaining blister-free.

**Sun exposure** - As is the case with any outdoor activity, too much time spent in the sun can lead to sunburn, dehydration, or in extreme cases, heatstroke. Before heading outdoors, be sure to slather on some sunscreen at an adequate SPF level for your skin type. Re-apply it every two hours, or if your skin is wet for an extended period of time. Also be sure to wear a hat--a sunburned head is very painful and can lead to a serious headache or contribute to heatstroke. Be sure to take frequent breaks and drink plenty of water, especially if you are outdoors during the hottest time of the day, typically between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.



**MOST IMPORTANTLY, REMEMBER TO CALL US IF YOU ARE SUFFERING. WE ARE EXPERTS IN PAIN MANAGEMENT, AND WANT YOU BACK IN YOUR GARDEN AS MUCH AS YOU DO!**

**314.644.2081**

*Testimonial: "I became (an InMotion) chiropractic patient in mid-summer of this year. I had been significantly restricted from playing tennis, and even gardening, because of being in great pain.... It is now the beginning of fall and I am pain free. This is where the real testimonial begins—all that I am able to do again that gives my life quality. I am practicing yoga on a daily basis...and my yard looks great!" ~Anne Marie A.*