



Gardening and Yardwork Safety



Gardening and yardwork are popular, and sometimes necessary, summertime activities. Both can have health benefits due to the combination of physical activity and exposure to nature and sunlight. Yet, there is risk of injury involved. Check out these tips to stay safe while working in the yard and garden this summer:



Treat it Like Exercise (Because It Is)

- Always stretch before, during and after gardening and yard activities. Warming up your muscles with dynamic movements and minimizing repetitive motions will reduce your risk of pain and soreness.
- Every 20 minutes, take a break and switch tasks. Use breaks to hydrate and stretch, while making sure your muscles have plenty of time to rest.



Kneel, Don't Crouch

- Kneeling, instead of crouching or squatting, with one foot on the ground for support will help keep your back straight while working low to the ground. Try to switch legs every few minutes and use a foam mat or knee pads for support.
- When on the ground, avoid sitting back on your knees, as this position is less stable and puts extra stress on your joints. Using a garden bench or stool instead can reduce the strain on your hands, wrists and knees.



Use Proper Form and Tools

- Never bend at the waist when lifting something. Instead, activate your leg muscles and keep the weight close to your body to avoid back strain while transporting heavy loads. If something is too heavy to move safely, consider using a wheelbarrow.
- Select tools with ergonomic handles that match the job and your abilities. Handheld tools with comfortable grips help keep your wrist straight, while larger tools (e.g., rakes) with height-appropriate handles can help protect your back from hunching.



Take Appropriate Precautions

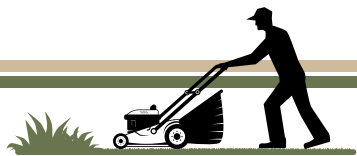
- Wear protective yet comfortable clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants, closed-toed shoes and gloves when gardening. These items help shield you from cuts, scrapes and insect bites that can become infected.
- Always remove rings before gardening, operating machinery or engaging in outdoor activities. Rings can catch on other objects and pull your finger with it, which can result in serious injury.



Limit Sun Exposure

- Apply sunscreen before going outdoors to protect your skin, even if it's cloudy. When sunny, wearing a hat and sunglasses can shade your eyes from the sun's bright light.
- If possible, work outside during the cooler hours of the day and break up bigger tasks into shorter activities to allow time for rest. Take breaks indoors or in a shady area to recover from warm temperatures.

Lawn Mower Safety Tips | *Things you should never do:*



Drink alcoholic beverages before operating a lawn mower.



Leave a lawn mower unattended when it is running.



Remove switch safety devices, shields or guards.



Mow barefoot or in open-toed shoes, like sandals.



Use your hands or feet to clean debris from the blade.



Cut wet grass or cut grass during inclement weather.