

HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY



8 SIMPLE TIPS TO HELPING YOUR BACK IN THE GARDEN

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Springing In To Action !

At the beginning of spring the weather picks up and our gardens begin to stir. Things that grow need care and unfortunately the weeds grow just as fast as our flowers. While many of our patients come in for treatment of their shoulder, elbow and wrist pain caused by lifting awkward items, we predominantly see irritated backs from prolonged bending and carrying heavy loads.

Gardening inherently puts strain on the lower back, especially the discs. So if you're a keen (or even an unwilling) gardener it may be worthwhile keeping a few things in mind. As lots of tasks around the garden require repetitive activities that can lead to aches and pains.

To avoid strain, and to help minimise your risk of injury, pay attention to the following 8 tips



Gardening- simple precautions

Gardening is an all year round activity. There is always something to be done no matter what the season. From sweeping and raking leaves, weeding, digging, mowing, planting, lifting, mulching and pruning. Its no wonder gardeners get a year round work out. Yet we don't think of it as an exercise session. However back pain can be a common occurrence and there are some tips to helping prevent and manage it, just as you would if you were heading to a gym session.

Warm up

Try a 10 minute brisk walk and stretches for the spine and limbs. Gentle back stretches in each direction, calf and quad stretches are a good start.

Vary your positions

Be aware of how your body feels as you work in your garden. If a part of your body starts to ache, take a break, stretch that body part in the opposite direction it was in, or switch to a different gardening activity. So make sure you give those working muscle groups regular breaks and change position and or take a short rest every 15-20 minutes. If you have been doing lots of bending, make sure you take the opportunity to arch backwards, if you've been doing a lot of reaching up high and leaning backwards, then lie on your back on the ground and hug your knees in towards your chest. Ideally change your jobs every half an hour and have regular breaks, even if it's just to grab a drink of water or use the toilet.

Make use of right tools

Make use of a garden cart or wheelbarrow to move heavy planting materials or tools. Keep the weight over the wheel. Look for equipment that suits your height and build to help prevent back pain. Remember that lighter, long handled tools can reduce the need to bend and give you more leverage. A pruner on an extension pole will save you over reaching or the hassle of negotiating a ladder. Getting hold of a powered gardening tool can save you time and reserve your energy for the more enjoyable parts of gardening. A powered post hole digger for planting or an electric hedge trimmer may save your back.

IF YOU HAVE BACK PAIN



OPTIONS

Whilst anti-inflammatory medication has a role to play in the management of acute back pain, be wary of over reliance. Manual therapy, dry needling, specific and general exercise and activity modification strategies are all part of a holistic management solution with your physiotherapist.

DON'T IGNORE THE PAIN.

Our caring Physiotherapists have the skills to correctly assess the problem and provide safe effective treatment. Early Treatment can be the key to a speedy recovery for anyone suffering low back pain.

Contact us to speak with a physio



WE CAN HELP

At Hindmarsh and Fitzroy Physiotherapy we are friendly, experienced, patient focused professionals with a passion for helping a wide variety of people. We know that there are many excellent Physiotherapy practices to choose, but finding one you can count on and build a relationship with, knowing they have pride and expertise in their approach, high quality treatment regimes, empathy and support is not easy. This is us. Call or email us today for an appointment and we look forward to helping you soon. We look forward to your call

**This article is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment and should not be interpreted as such. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned in the article, please contact our physiotherapists for a comprehensive assessment and treatment plan. Always seek advice from a qualified medical professional and use of this information is at your own risk.*