



How to Eliminate Back Pain & Enjoy Yard Work This Spring



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Have you been dealing with back pain and wondering what you can do to resolve it once and for all? Do you worry your back will get in your enjoyment of taking care of your yard? At Expert Physio Plus, our physiotherapists will identify the root cause of your pain and give you the tools to resolve it and prevent it from returning!

Too often, people with back pain misinterpret the signals their body is sending and try to do too much or avoid all activity and do too little. Whether the condition is acute or chronic, the key is restoring mobility and function. Until you restore normal function, tissue healing will not occur, and the problem will persist.

Fortunately, at Expert Physio Plus, we know how to strike the right balance and can help you resolve your pain and restore your function so you can get back to doing what you love! Request an appointment with one of our specialists today, and let us help you get back to taking care of the yard the way you want to!

Common reasons for gardeners to suffer from back pain

After being cooped up indoors through the long winter months, most homeowners can't help but start planning and preparing for a thriving, clean-cut yard this spring. Unfortunately, a sedentary lifestyle through the fall and winter months leads to a higher risk of pain and/or injury when the gardening season starts.

Too often, the prevailing advice gardeners hear is how important it is to avoid specific tasks due to risks for lower back pain. Although this advice may seem to make sense and appropriate in certain circumstances, the research is clear, avoiding movements is not as effective as being prepared by staying active and maintaining or improving strength.

Proper care of your yard requires repetitive movements, prolonged positions and may include heavy lifting. These activities have been associated with back pain, but avoiding them is not as effective as addressing them directly. When working on your lawn, there are few injuries as common as strained or pulled muscles. Strained muscles affect people of all ages, fitness levels, and physical abilities. The repetitive nature of the tasks needed in yard work sets you up for strains. In addition, bending and twisting movements are dangerous and can cause muscle strains and may even injure the discs in the spine.

The source of back pain typically comes from injury or irritation of the muscles, joints (including the intervertebral discs and facet joints), nerves, or surrounding ligaments and other soft tissue.

The contributing factors that are most often associated with back pain include:

- Improper posture or prolonged positions (i.e., prolonged sitting or bending)
- Spinal muscle and tissue damage (i.e., lifting strains or repetitive bending and twisting)
- Limited hip, spine, and pelvis mobility
- Spinal/pelvic muscle weaknesses (aka "core" weakness)
- Poor abdominal, pelvic and back muscle coordination (i.e., compensations due to injury)

Ignoring the pain and/or pushing through pain can leave you susceptible to pain and injury. A proactive approach can reduce the risks and improve your overall health so your body can handle the stressors that can negatively impact your spine. At Expert Physio Plus, our physiotherapists can help provide you with exercise programs and routines to make sure your body is adequately prepared and can handle gardening demands.

How Physiotherapy Can Help Your Back Pain

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Too often, people wait until their pain is severe or don't exercise regularly throughout the year, which leads to more complications and possible injuries. Our team will conduct a thorough evaluation to determine the injury's severity and identify any other weaknesses or limitations that may affect your function and recovery ability.

We will use this information to develop a comprehensive program that includes targeted manual techniques, mobility work, strengthening, and appropriate pain relief techniques for the individual athlete.

Our therapeutic interventions will start with pain management and restoring mobility to the injured area. Next, we will focus on progressing your strength and dynamic stability exercises designed to restore function and prevent injuries. We will also incorporate body mechanics and proper lifting exercises to stimulate your nervous system and help ensure you can adequately perform the tasks you need to avoid an injury.

Just like you need to warm up at the gym, you should warm up in the garden. Taking care of your yard requires large ranges of motion and strength so you can bend, lift, kneel, and squat properly. At Expert Physio Plus, our team recommends addressing your limitations head-on.

Avoiding movements will not prepare your body to perform them when the time comes. Instead, take a proactive approach, plan

frequent breaks, perform simple backbends to counteract the forward begins, and avoid ignoring or pushing through pain.

Request an appointment at Expert Physio Plus today!

Although it can be crucial to modify how you lift, limit activity, and perform a proper warm-up before working in the yard, it is essential to know that getting help with mild pain is also important.

Request an appointment with one of our specialists, and let us help you get your body ready for a pain-free gardening season!

Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6620421/> • <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30252425/> • <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32669487/> • <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-44664-8> • <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/>



Top 6 Spring Gardening Tips

In Ottawa, Canada, tulips hold a special significance due to the annual Canadian Tulip Festival. This event celebrates the city's connection with tulips, which dates back to World War II when the Dutch royal family took refuge in Ottawa. In gratitude for Canada's hospitality, Princess Juliana of the Netherlands sent thousands of tulip bulbs to Ottawa. Since then, tulips have become a symbol of friendship and international cooperation.

As the buds begin to bloom and the sun warms the earth, many of us are eager to get back into our gardens. However, while gardening can be a therapeutic and enjoyable activity, it's important to remember that it also requires physical exertion and carries the risk of injury if proper precautions aren't taken.

With gardening season upon us, here are some tips to help you avoid injury this Spring.

1. Warm Up: Treat gardening like any other physical activity and start with a gentle warm-up. Take a short walk, do some light stretching,

or perform simple movements to prepare your muscles for the tasks ahead.

- 2. Use Proper Tools:** Invest in ergonomic gardening tools that are designed to reduce strain on your body. Choose tools with padded handles and long handles to minimize bending and reaching.
- 3. Mind Your Posture:** Maintain good posture while planting flowers. Keep your back straight and bend from the hips and knees instead of hunching over to prevent strain on your back muscles.
- 4. Take Breaks:** Gardening can be physically demanding, so listen to your body and take regular breaks. Stand up, stretch, and hydrate to prevent fatigue and reduce the risk of overuse injuries.
- 5. Lift Carefully:** When lifting heavy bags of soil or pots of tulip bulbs, remember to lift with your legs, not your back. Bend your knees, keep your back straight, and use your leg muscles to lift objects safely.
- 6. Pace Yourself:** Don't try to do too much in one session. Break larger gardening tasks into smaller, more manageable ones, and spread them out over several days to avoid overexertion.

By following these tips and celebrating the rich history of tulips in Ottawa, you can enjoy a safe and rewarding gardening experience this spring. Happy planting!

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Osteopathic Manual Therapy

Have you been dealing with a painful condition that traditional healthcare doesn't seem to be helping the way you'd hoped? You may benefit from osteopathic treatments.

At Expert Physio Plus, we offer an integrated team of highly trained practitioners dedicated to helping you get the results you deserve!

Osteopaths understand the human body's interconnectedness and treat the root cause of your condition. This approach helps provide symptom relief while also helping to prevent or reduce the condition(s) from reoccurring in the future. In addition, osteopathy can help the circulatory, nervous and lymphatic systems.

If you are looking for a safe and highly effective way to find pain relief while helping your mobility and overall health and well-being, call Expert Physio Plus today and schedule an appointment with one of our osteopaths!



Don't let pain impact your quality of life. Request an appointment with us today by scanning the QR code!



Patient Success

"Expert Physio is a highly professional clinic that I would recommend to anyone."

"Expert Physio is a highly professional clinic that I would recommend to anyone. I especially want to thank Raphaëlle who was the catalyst in discovering my problem. She made recommendations to my doctor to help confirm her original conclusion. She is very informed, listens to the patient and quickly comes up with a plan. Raphaëlle is now helping me manage my pain until the medical procedure can be done."

— LL.



3 Exercises to Strengthen Your Shoulders & Upper Back

Maintaining strength throughout your shoulders and upper back is crucial to avoid neck pain! The team at Expert Physio Plus can help you develop a customized exercise program that addresses your needs and fits with your abilities. Curious about what exercises we might include in that program?

Here's an overview of three common resistance training exercises we often use to help people with neck discomfort. Before trying any of them yourself, make an appointment with our team to ensure you're using the right weight and proper form.

1. Shoulder Press: With a dumbbell in each hand, make a "field goal" shape with your arms; your arms are bent at a 90-degree angle with your palms facing up. Brace your core as you press the weights overhead, then slowly lower them back down to your starting position.

2. Reverse Flies: Lean forward at your waist with your elbows slightly bent and dumbbell in each hand. Slowly raise the weights until they are in line with your shoulders.

3. Modified Push-Ups: Push-ups are a great way to build upper back and shoulder strength, but if you find the standard push-up too difficult, never fear: the modified version is just as effective. Start on your hands and knees (instead of your feet) with the body in a straight line from head to knee. Slowly lower your chest until it's a few inches off the floor, then rise back up.

A dedicated strength-training program is a great way to reduce neck discomfort. Schedule an appointment with us to get started with one of your own!

