



Hip and Back Stretch

Twisting, lifting and carrying all put strain on the back which is why a good back stretch is vital.

Sitting on a chair or bench, slowly twist from the waist and try to look behind you. You should feel this in your hips and back.

NOTE: you should not feel pain – do this slowly and remain sitting tall.

Quadriceps Stretch

The upper thigh, one of the main muscles used when bending to lift objects.

Standing upright support yourself on a wall or chair with one hand. With the other lightly hold on to your ankle and raise, as close to your bottom as possible, keeping your knees together and gently pushing your hips forward.



Calf Stretch

You use your calf muscles everyday whilst walking however this will be exaggerated whilst gardening due to all the bending and standing that you might do.

Place both hands on a wall in front of you. Place one foot about 2 feet in front of the other and then gently lean forward keeping the back leg straight. Then swap legs.



Upper-back Stretch

Digging and raking can cause your upper back to work really hard, so it is vital that you stretch it off afterwards.

Clasp your hands in front of you and round through your shoulders and back. NOTE: do not lock out your elbows. This can be done standing or sitting.



Get Active, Get Gardening!



For more information please contact:

Hampshire County Council: www.hants.gov.uk/bettertime

Sport Hampshire & IOW: www.spoorthampshireiow.co.uk

Or call 0845 603 5638

DESIGN : CCRA DESIGN UNIT 01962 826747

The great news

about becoming active is that you don't have to join a gym! You should aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity 5 times a week (60 minutes every day for children).

Gardening is a great way of doing this and even though you may feel that gardening is more of a hobby, it definitely counts!

Did you know?

Back pain is a common complaint of gardeners, every year 1.6 million people will suffer with a back injury. However by following the advice in this leaflet and also ensuring that if you do any lifting/pushing or pulling in the garden you follow these tips we hope you will reduce the chance of having any back problems.

- Ensure you bend your knees and use your leg muscles rather than your back
- Hold the load close to your body
- Try to avoid any jerky movements

Before doing any kind of activity it is important to ensure your body is warm. This could be taking a brisk walk around the garden including a few mobility exercises, such as arm or ankle rotations. By ensuring your joints are warm and ready for use we hope you may dramatically reduce your chances of injury, meaning you can garden for longer and hopefully more frequently. Some examples to try are:

Neck

Due to all the carrying and lifting you may do during gardening, mobility is very important.

Standing up straight and without making any jerky movements, slowly roll your head forward from one side to the other.



Arms and Shoulders

Start by circling your shoulders in small circles forwards and then backwards getting bigger and bigger as you do. Then repeat the same process with your arms.



As with any exercise programme, if at any point during your workout you begin to feel faint, dizzy, or have physical discomfort, you should stop immediately and consult a GP.

Hips

Hip rotations are very important as this not only warms up your hips but also your lower back. Start by circling your hips slowly getting bigger and bigger. Ensure you spend time circling your hips both ways.



Below are just a few stretches that are very important to do **after** you have finished gardening. These will stretch out your main muscles which may reduce the chances of aching. Try to hold each one for around 20–30 seconds – this should not cause pain.

Full Body Stretch

Although you may think of gardening as just a hobby or a job that comes with owning a garden, it actually is a good workout for the whole body!

Start by standing tall and reaching your arms to the sky and stretch as tall as you can go.



Chest Stretch

This is a really important stretch to do as you will use your chest muscles a lot whilst lifting things and mowing the lawn.

Clasp your hands behind your back. Gently and slowly straighten your elbows and raise your arms as high as comfortably possible. This can be done sitting or standing.



Hamstring Stretch

Your hamstrings are the backs of your thighs and are a large muscle group used in gardening when bending down to pick things up or walking with heavy loads.

Gently place one foot in front of the other. Keeping your front leg straight, bend your back leg slowly until you can feel a gentle pull on the back of your straight leg. If you need to rest your hands on your leg ensure you gently place them on the bent leg above the knee. Once you have stretched one leg remember to stretch the other!!

