

Gardening Tips to Avoid Wrist/Hand Pain

Wrist Pain

Repetitive strain injuries in the wrist, especially on the thumb side of the wrist, can be very painful and difficult to resolve for an active gardener. Avoid overusing your wrist with these simple tips:

- *Use ergonomic handles:* Wear gloves and avoid tools that force you to bend your wrists up and down forcefully (like grasping a spade with a straight handle). Try finding tools that have an "L" shaped handle, so your wrists stay neutral while working.
- *Take rest breaks and stretch:* Take a break every 30 minutes and be sure to s t r e t c h (hold each for 10-15 seconds, and repeat 2-3 times).

- Prayer Stretch for Flexors
- Wrist Extensor Stretch



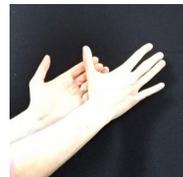
- *Use two hands:* Many hands make light work!
- *Use larger joints and keep wrists neutral:* Especially when digging, the more you can put your whole body or arm into the motion the more you will save the tiny joints of your wrists and fingers.
- *Respect pain and ice if necessary:* Stop any activity that causes pain and take the opportunity to ice. Ice packs can be applied for 20-30 minutes with a towel layer to protect your skin, and may be repeated several times a day, as needed.

Hand Pain

Arthritis and overuse injuries are common causes for pain in the hand. Avoid a flare-up and protect your hands by following these simple tips:

- *Use ergonomic handles:* Try finding tools that have large handles and an "L" shaped handle, or create your own! Foam or tape can easily be added to widen a skinny handle.
- *Take rest breaks and stretch:* Take a break every 30 minutes and be sure to s t r e t c h (hold each for 10-15 seconds, and repeat 2-3 times).

- Thumb Abduction Stretch
- Finger Extension/Abduction Stretch



- *Use two hands:* Many hands make light work!
- *Avoid tools that are old/rusty and difficult to use:* Make sure your tools are in good working order before struggling to grip and squeeze them, especially during repetitive jobs.
- *Use the pinky side of your hand:* For jobs requiring smaller tools such as pruning snips, flip your tool upside down and grip your snips from the pinky side of your hand. You'll have more power and save your thumbs from repetitive strain.
- *Work close and straight-on:* Avoid reaching to minimize strain throughout your arms.