



After Hours Family Medicine - Article Series

## **Stay Safe While Doing Yard Work**

Many people look forward to warm weather to get back out in the yard. Here are some helpful tips to minimize injury while you work in your yard:

Regardless of the activity, it is important to stretch. Any time you are going to be working your muscles, take 10 minutes to stretch and warm up. This will go a long way in preventing injury to your back.

When working in the yard, it is vital to handle tasks appropriately. When lifting anything, bend from the knees to keep the stress off your back. If you are moving material from one place to another, use a cart or wheel barrow to help make that move smoother. When raking or shoveling, stand with your feet apart and one in front of the other. Switch the front foot every 10 minutes.

Wear gloves - with the warm weather comes a number of irritating plants so having gloves on will protect your hands. In addition, gloves help improve grip on tools and protect your hands from debris.

Consider the rest of your attire. Long pants and long sleeve shirts help protect your skin from irritants and debris. Sunscreen-treated clothing can also help protect your skin from sun damage.

Vary your activities. It is a good idea, regardless of the type of activity, to change it up regularly. If you are doing a sitting task for a period of time, take a break and do something that requires moving around. This helps to keep all your muscles moving and minimizes stress injuries.

Be sure to have the right tools. There are great tools available for any job that are ergonomic and help reduce the stress on your body. Getting the right tool for the right job increases your safety as well as your ability to get the job done in a timely fashion.

Take breaks as needed especially in hot weather. Be sure to stay hydrated and sit in the shade if you start to feel warm.

**WEAR SUNSCREEN.** Sunscreen is vital when you are outside regardless of how much the sun is showing. UV rays come through the clouds the same as when it is sunny out.

Consider eye protection. If you are using a tool that has moving parts, it is a good idea to have some eye protection. Bits of wood, grass or dirt can be extremely irritating to the eye and are hard to anticipate as they will come at you very quickly.

Working in the yard is a wonderful way to vary your exercise and make your home more beautiful. With these safety tips, you can get out there with confidence!

After Hours Family Medicine

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