



Core Stabilization Training For Gardening

with Stacy L. Walters, RTK

Along with the pleasure that every gardener experiences as the tulips pop up in the Spring, come the hours spent preparing the yard and garden after a long winter. This can be strenuous work involving physical exertion and repetitive movements using muscles that may not have been used since last year's clean up.

Perform the following exercises 2-3 days per week to strengthen the large, superficial muscles that move the body, and also the smaller, intrinsic muscles that help stabilize the body during movement.

Spring Clean-up Conditioning Guidelines

- Warm up for five to 10 minutes (see Gardening Warm-up)
- Complete up to 3 sets of 12 repetitions for each exercise
- Rest for 30-60 seconds between sets
- Exhale on exertion
- Perform the exercises slowly and keep control (imagine that you are balancing a book on your head during exercises)
- Hold proper posture while strengthening (hold your shoulders and chin back, naval in and abdominals contracting)
- Stretch for 15 minutes after strength training (see Post-Gardening Stretches)

Perform the Spring Clean-up Conditioning exercises 2-3 times per week to prepare your body for the marathon gardening demands at the beginning of the season. Continue to practice the exercises and enjoy easier, pain and injury-free gardening all season!

my gym is green

1 Squats

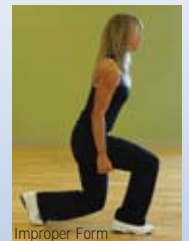
Begin standing with your back against the wall. Keep your feet approximately two feet away from the wall. Slowly bend your knees and allow your back to slide down the wall until thighs are about parallel to the floor. Slowly push through your heels to return to starting position, do not lock your knees.



Proper Form

2 Reverse Lunges

Take a very large step backward with your left foot (split stance). Keep your weight in the right heel and make sure that your front knee is over your ankle! Stay up on your back toes. Step up and together while pressing your weight through the front heel, then place your right foot back. Alternate feet each repetition. Keep in mind that even though you are stepping back, the goal is to lunge straight down aiming to, but not touching, the floor.



Improper Form

3 Wall Pushups

Begin by facing the wall arms-length away, feet hip distance apart, legs straight with weight in your toes. Place hands on the wall slightly wider than your shoulders. Keep your head in neutral position, bend elbows to lower head/chest toward wall, coming as close as you can to it but not touching it. Straighten arms and return to starting position.



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4 Tricep Dips

To prepare, place your hands right next to your hips while seated in a chair with your feet on the floor. Hold your weight in your hands and ensure that your seat is close to the chair and your shoulders are back. Bend your elbows and lower your body a few inches (do not go below a 90 degree bend in your elbows). Press back up to the starting position.



5 Hitchhiker

Carefully scoot to the front edge of a chair with your feet on the floor. Pull your naval in, and then bend at the waist. Place your arms down in front of your shins with your thumbs up. Lift your arms up aiming your thumbs toward each other behind you. Squeeze your shoulder blades and keep pulling your naval in! Lower arms and repeat.



6 Walk the Plank

Begin on the floor on your hands and knees. Push your pelvis forward so that your body is in a straight diagonal line. Imagine your tailbone aiming to the floor and your shoulder blades flush with your back. You have the option to keep your knees on the floor (easier) or push up into a full plank (more difficult).



Lift your right hand off the floor and "walk" down to your forearm, then come down to your left forearm into a full plank on your forearms. "Walk" back up to your hands leading with the left and continue to alternate sides. It is very important to keep your abdominals tight during the entire range of motion!



7 Side Plank

Place your body in a straight line lying on your right side. Place your right forearm on the floor and bend your right knee so that your foot is behind you. Press yourself up and balance on your forearm and side of your bottom knee.



(When you are ready to progress and increase the intensity of this exercise, straighten both legs and place your right hand on the floor.) Keep your shoulders down and naval in. Hold this position 20 – 60 seconds & repeat on the other side.



