



Gardening Warm-Up

with Stacy L. Walters, RTK

Gardening, like any other strenuous activity, requires a dynamic warm up to prepare the heart, mind, muscles and joints for physical activity. Benefits include enhanced blood flow to the muscles and increased range of motion, reducing the risk of injury and next-day soreness.

Warm up Stretching Guidelines

- Always complete five to 10 minutes of aerobic activity before you stretch
- Effective stretching results in gentle discomfort, not pain
- Hold stretches for 20 seconds during the warm up phase
- Avoid bouncing
- Do not hold your breath
- Maintain proper posture (naval in, shoulders and chin back)

Body awareness and good posture will keep bones and joints in proper alignment while gardening so that muscles are recruited and used properly.

Dynamic Posture Cues

- Naval in
- Zip up rib cage
- Shoulders back
- Shoulder blades down
- Chin in

Now you are ready to go outside and get your hands dirty! Be sure to drink plenty of water while you are gardening to prevent dehydration! It is also important to begin with light gardening tasks gradually progressing to more intense tasks.

my gym is green

1 Aerobic Activity

A quality gardening warm up begins with five to 10 minutes of light to moderate aerobic activity to gradually increase heart rate. This results in an increase in body temperature preparing the muscles for stretching.

March in place and then take a brisk walk around your yard or garden while performing backwards shoulder rolls or arm circles. Walk around the outside of your house and then grab the tools and supplies that you will need one by one making several trips outside.

Once you have increased your body's temperature, you are ready to stretch. To combat next-day soreness and prevent injury it is very important to stretch the low back, hamstrings and shoulder musculature.

Stretches

2 Low Back

To stretch the low back, begin by sitting in a chair. Hold underneath one knee and pull it in toward your chest.

Switch sides.

Complete this stretch by pulling both knees in toward your chest.



3 Hamstrings

To stretch the hamstrings, place one foot on the ground in front of your chair then straighten the opposite leg with your heel on the floor. Place your hands on your lap for support and gently lean forward.

Keep that leg straight!

Switch legs.



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4 Quadriceps

Hold on to the back of a chair for stability while standing. Bend your right knee and wrap a towel around your ankle. Hold the towel with your right hand and slowly pull your heel toward your buttock. Gently push your pelvis forward, you should feel the stretch in the front of your thigh.

Switch sides.

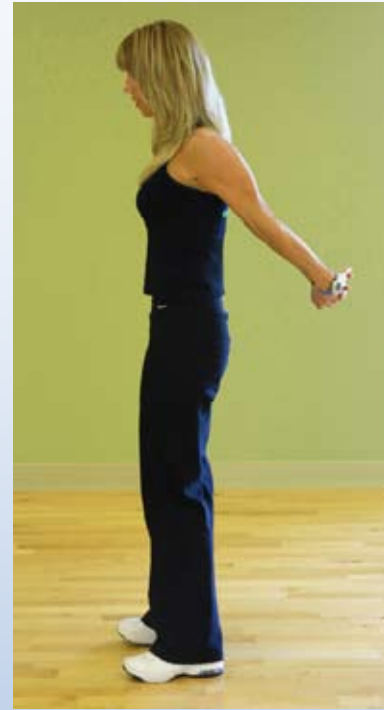
Variation:

If you can comfortably reach your ankle, hold your ankle with your right hand and discard towel)



5 Chest

Stretching the chest and front of the shoulders, clasp your hands behind your back with palms facing in. Keep your chest and shoulders open as you gently lift your arms.



6 Triceps

Begin this stretch by reaching your right hand back to touch your right shoulder. Use your left hand to assist the right elbow upward. Switch sides.



7 Shoulder and Neck

To stretch the back of the shoulder, begin by placing the right arm across the body. Bring the left hand underneath and gently pull arm across the body making sure to keep the shoulders square to the front. Add a neck stretch by aiming your right ear toward your right shoulder. Switch sides.



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8 Wrist Extension

While standing, place your hands shoulder level high and shoulder width apart on a wall with fingertips aiming upward. Gently aim the heel of your hand toward the wall.



9 Wrist Flexion

While standing, place your right arm in front of you shoulder level high. Aim the fingertips downward and use your left hand to assist and gently push the fingertips downward. Switch sides.

