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Keeping Your Lawn Green and Your Back Pain-Free

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As summer comes into full swing and our attention turns away from shoveling snow and toward maintaining our lawns and gardens, weeds are not the only things that may get “pulled.” Low back injuries become all too common as we dust off our lawn mowers and trowels and once again resume gardening and lawn care. New York Pain Management would like to present some helpful tips to the would-be green thumbs to prevent injury.

1. Let the tools do the work

It sounds simple enough. Of course it may be possible for you to carry a 20-lb bag of mulch by yourself to the shed. However, it certainly is much easier to grab a wheelbarrow and let it shoulder the load. Similarly, instead of reaching overhead to trim the hedges, it is easier and safer to take out the ladder and use it to aid you. A simple way to prevent injury is to give your body a break and let your tools do the work.

2. Use the right tools for the job.

One of the most common causes of pain and injury is using wrong or inadequate tools. Use a tool of the proper length. The longer the handle, the greater the force

and the less bending and stooping required. Too long, however, and the handle becomes unwieldy causing more strain and stress. Use handles with comfortable non-slip grips. Wearing work gloves not only protects your hands but also absorbs some of the force and stress that would otherwise be transmitted to your body. If possible, use ergonomically designed tools. The extra cost is usually less than the cost of a physician’s co-pay.

3. Use your legs

Your legs support the rest of your body on a daily basis and have the power to support heavier loads. Instead of bending at the waist and lifting with your back, bend at the knees and lift with your legs. Your legs are designed to support more weight and pressure than your back can.

4. Take a break

Often we become so engrossed in our activities that we fail to take a much-needed break. Repetitive motions are a common source of injury. Keep a timer and take a break every 30 minutes. Staying hydrated is also important and will allow your muscles to recuperate. Besides, what’s the point of all that hard work if you don’t

take time to step back and enjoy the fruits of your labor?

5. Know your limits

Every individual is unique and there is no single regimen that will fit everyone. Know yourself. I always tell my patients that they know their bodies better than anyone else does and if something feels wrong, just stop doing it. Start slow because most of us are not as fit as we think we are after a long winter.

Most importantly, if you do injure yourself, don’t wait too long to seek medical advice. Often seemingly minor strains and sprains, if left untreated, can lead to more serious issues later on. With some attention and care, you can make your gardening and lawn maintenance experience pain-free.

New York Pain Management has Board Certified Pain Physicians working for you. We are accredited by the Association for Ambulatory Healthcare and have locations in Clifton Park and Queensbury. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.nypainfree.com>

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