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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 towards maintaining our lawns and gardens, weeds are not the only things that may get "pulled." Back and neck 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 out there 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 safer to grab a wheelbarrow and let it shoulder the load. Similarly, instead of reaching overhead to trim the hedges, it is much easier and safer to take out the ladder and use it to aid you. An easy way to prevent injury is to give your body a break and let your tools do the work.

### 2. Get comfortable

Instead of constantly bending or kneeling on the ground to do your weeding, cushioned knee pads or a kneeling pad will allow you to be more comfortable and get your work done quicker. Lawn and garden maintenance doesn't have to be torturous. Your knees and your back will thank you.

### 3. Work safer

One of the most common causes of pain and injury is neglecting to use safety equipment. Work gloves not only protect your hands, but also absorb some of the force and stress that would otherwise be transmitted to your body. Similarly, safety glasses protect your eyes when using an edge trimmer or other power tool. All tools should have handles with comfortable non-slip grips. Wearing a safety helmet when cutting down tree limbs or working overhead may prevent neck and head injuries. Accidents happen and an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

### 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 can 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 and get help

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. If the job is too big or too heavy, get the help you need. None of us are as young as we think we are. Know your limits!

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 have locations in Clifton Park and Queensbury and more information can be found on our website at <http://www.nypainfree.com>

**Liberate yourself from the constraints of chronic pain with New York Pain Management.**

Our goal is to significantly reduce or completely eliminate your pain.

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