

May Exercise of the Month GARDENING

It's time to switch out those winter mitts for gardening gloves, and trade off the hockey skates for rubber boots – spring is here!

- ❖ At this time of year it's easy to get in your daily physical activity – just step out into your yard. Gardening gives you more than just fresh vegetables and beautiful flowers; it also gives you a workout and keeps you fit and active!

Benefits of gardening

- Being outdoors
- Fresh air
- Growing and eating healthy food
- Having beautiful plants and flowers
- Increased physical health
- Improved mental health



All types of gardening count. You don't have to grow vegetables to get benefits from a garden. Keeping your lawn nice, planting flowers, having a rock garden, raking leaves, pruning trees etc...are all beneficial to your health.

Remember, **water** is not just for your plants. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water before, during and after tending to your garden.

Just like with any other workout, always make sure to keep **good posture** and proper alignment when gardening. Take frequent breaks and mix up activities to prevent stiffness. And don't forget to **warm up** before and **stretch** afterwards!

Did you know?

Gardening is Canadian's second favourite exercise! Walking is the #1 favourite. You can combine both by going for a walk as your warm up before you start your yard work!



WARM UP AND STRETCHES

Always warm up before, and stretch after gardening to prevent injury and stiffness.

Warm up exercises can involve walking in place, room to room or walking outside for at least 2 to 5 minutes. You can also walk in a seated position if you have problems with walking or balance. Also include range of motion exercises in your warm up.

Range of Motion Exercises – do 5 to 10 repetitions of each exercise

- 1) Roll shoulders forward and backward
- 2) Bring one arm forward and one arm back
- 3) Open your arms wide and make small circles forward and backward
- 4) Look over your shoulder
 - Slowly rotate in both directions with a slight pause in the middle
- 5) Lift your arm over your head and lean over to one side. Repeat on other side
- 6) Slowly circle or rotate your hips in both directions as if you were using a hula hoop. Caution: use small circular movements

Stretches are held for a minimum of 15 seconds for 1 to 2 times. The greatest improvement in mobility occurs if stretches are held for 20 to 30 seconds.



Neck Stretch – drop the shoulder blade and tilt the head away. You may wish to place your hand on your head to increase the stretch.



Chest Stretch - place your hands on the back of a chair and bring shoulder blades together.

Contributor:
Ingen Mueller, RD
Community Wellness Facilitator
Interlake-Eastern RHA
Riverton Community Health Center
Phone: 1 (204) 378-3105
Cell: 1 (204) 280-0299
E-mail: imueller@ierha.ca



Interlake-Eastern
Regional Health Authority