Stepping Stones to a better posture: Gardening

Gardening – don't over do it with the trowel

As a nation, we love our gardens and spend a considerable amount of time and money on them. As we rush to get those jobs in the garden done, there is a risk that gardeners may injure themselves. What everyone wants is to be fit and healthy enough to actually enjoy sitting in their garden and enjoy the fruits of their labours come summer time, so here are some helpful tips from the British Chiropractic Association.

Clothes

- Don't wear clothes that are tight or could constrict your movement.

Warm Up

- Gardening is like any other exercise; you need to warm up first. Don't go straight into heavy garden work; start off with lighter jobs as this will lessen the chance of muscle strain.

Using a ladder

- When using a ladder or steps, make sure you are always facing it, keeping your shoulders, hips and knees pointing in the same direction.
- Rather than leaning or reaching, move the ladder or step regularly to keep up with where you are.
- Any kind of ladder must be firmly and safely planted in position and, if possible, have someone else there to keep an eye on things.

Clever pruning

- Get as close as possible to the things you are pruning and avoid overstretching to reach the area you are dealing with.
- Invest in some long handled secateurs to reach plants and bushes that are beyond normal reach.

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Take a break

- Vary your activity by spending no more than 20-30 minutes on any one thing and make sure you take regular breaks.

Be clever with the paving

- If laying a patio, keep the slab close to your body and bend your knees; it is sometimes better to bend one knee rather two, as your supporting leg gives you a position of strength.
- If using railway sleepers, two people will probably be needed.

Plan ahead

- If you are planning a trip to the local DIY store to buy heavy items such as cement or gravel, buy smaller bags rather than one big bag as they are easier and safer to carry.
- If you do buy heavy items, use a trolley and if on your own, ask an assistant at the store to help you.
- If buying things like compost, sand or gravel in bulkier amounts, shovel the contents of the large bags straight into smaller containers or wheelbarrow from the back of the car.
- Don't lift with your arms straight out, keep the elbows bent and to your side to minimise the stress on your back.
- If having items delivered, have them unloaded as close to where you need them as possible; this will save the effort of moving them again.
- A specialist garden trolley might be worth investing in to move these sorts of materials around, especially if you have lots of patio pots to move around as well.

Further information about BCA chiropractic treatment can be obtained by logging onto www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk For further information contact the British Chiropractic Association on 0118 950 5950.

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