

N E W S L E T T E R



EXCITED FOR GARDENING? AVOID BACK PAIN WITH THESE TIPS

ALSO INSIDE:

HOW CAN I PREVENT BACK PAIN OR SCIATICA WHILE GARDENING? • PATIENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT • AND MORE!

N E W S L E T T E R

PREPARE FOR GARDENING BY RETURNING TO YOUR TREATMENTS FOR BACK PAIN



Gardening offers the opportunity to plant flowers, clean out the flower beds and vegetable garden, and to plant bulbs that bloom. However, you have to take the necessary steps to protect your back from injury during gardening.

Gardening is a great way to get outside and take advantage of the fresh air, but it can also put a strain on your back. Millions of Americans suffer from debilitating back pain each year that affects their quality of life. It can present itself in a number of ways – whether you are having trouble getting out of bed, picking up your kids, putting on your socks and shoes, or partaking in your favorite hobbies, physical therapy can help relieve your back pain.

Our clinic can also diagnose whether the pain you're feeling is a result of general back pain or sciatica. Back pain typically develops as the result of an injury or muscle strain, which is why it

is so common with the repetitive bending, digging, and reaching that gardening entails. Sciatica is a specific type of back pain that is extremely common. It develops from issues surrounding the nerves and can be felt in the lower back, legs, or buttocks.

Sciatica occurs when the sciatic nerve becomes "pinched" or otherwise damaged in some way, thus resulting in a "shooting," "stinging," or "burning" sensation.

Millions of Americans suffer from debilitating back pain each year that affects their quality of life.

Whether you're experiencing general back pain or sciatica pain, our physical therapists at FYZICAL are licensed and trained in helping alleviate your discomfort. They can also provide you with helpful tips for avoiding back pain and sciatica while gardening (and doing other daily tasks) so you can comfortably enjoy your leisure activities.

HOW CAN I PREVENT BACK PAIN OR SCIATICA WHILE GARDENING?

1. Warm up first. This is especially important if you enjoy tending to your garden in the morning, as your lower back is the most vulnerable to injury first thing in the morning. It is important for morning gardeners to make sure to walk around, or at least be up and moving, for about 45 minutes before starting any bending or lifting. Adding in some back stretches can also help decrease your risk of pain or injury.

2. Dress for the garden. Weather permitting, it is ideal to wear long pants and long sleeves. If it is too warm to do so, at least make sure you have on protective gloves and supportive shoes. Make sure your shoes cover the entire foot and have a skid-resistant sole. Wearing shoes with good arch support helps take away some of the strain that gardening potentially causes to your back. Wearing flip flops or sandals potentially increases your risk of slipping, tripping or falling, which can potentially damage your back.

3. Safety First. Choose the right gardening tools to limit the stress on your body:

- The tool should be sturdy but not heavy.
- Choose handles that provide a comfortable grip size. The grip should feel soft and should easily fit into your hand.
- Choose a tool that is efficient at the task it is meant to perform – one that utilizes leverage and is sharp enough to cut.

Protect your back before, during, and after gardening by following these tips:

- Squat or use one knee to support yourself while gardening.
- Keep your spine as straight as possible.
- Use your hips and knees to lift, rather than your back.
- Alternate tasks such as digging, lifting, and walking. This relieves strain on your spine.



How can physical therapy help my back pain or sciatica? While following the above steps can greatly decrease your risk of pain or injury, they are not always completely effective. Fortunately, back pain and sciatica are both effectively treated through physical therapy. The main stages of your plan will focus on pain relief, which may include any combination of light exercises, manual therapy, ice and heat therapies, posture improvement, or any other treatment that your physical therapist deems fit.

As you progress and improve, your physical therapist will expand on your exercises and stretches by making them more intensive over time. This will help increase your overall strength and range of motion.

If you are experiencing back pain or sciatica and you are looking for relief, contact FYZICAL today – we'll get you on the road to recovery so you can get back to tending your garden in no time!

Call New Orleans: 504-861-4693 or St. Bernard: 504-277-6052 today to schedule an appointment!!

EXERCISE ESSENTIALS

TRY THIS EXERCISE TO IMPROVE BACK PAIN

SEATED KNEE TO CHEST STRETCH

Sit tall in a chair with feet flat on the floor. Gently pull the knees to the chest with both hands until a comfortable stretch is felt in the mid and lower back. Slowly return to the starting position. Aim to complete 4 to 6 repetitions of this exercise.

FYZICAL PT



Always consult your physical therapist or physician before starting exercises you are unsure of doing.

ARE YOU IN PAIN?

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LOUISIANA VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

Producing vegetables is a favorite hobby for many people. Homegrown vegetables have better flavor because they are harvested closer to their peak ripeness, which enables the production of more of their natural sugars. Plus, there is complete joy in watching a small seed develop into a delicious treat! Gardening provides a means of exercise, recreation and therapy, as well as opportunities for many to experience nature.

Home vegetable gardens range in size from a single potted plant to large gardens. Make your garden the size that will meet your needs without becoming a burden. Remember, we can plant and harvest 12 months a year, and some of those are really hot and some are cold, so don't overdo it!

Plan ahead. Locate the garden in a sunny area. Six to eight hours of sunlight each day is preferred. Fruit-bearing crops, such as tomatoes, peppers and squash, need full sunlight for best production. Otherwise, too much shade results in very little production for those crops. If you only have shady spots to garden in, leafy vegetables such as lettuce, broccoli and cabbage will tolerate more shade than fruit-bearing crops.

In Louisiana, vegetables can be planted year-round. As soon as one crop finishes bearing, pull it out, rework the rows and plant something else. Successive plantings made a week or two apart provide a continuous fresh supply of bush snap beans, peas, greens and other certain vegetables. Also, planting early, midseason and late-maturing varieties at the same time will extend your harvest.

This publication should be used as a guide to growing a successful Louisiana garden. The information was developed after considerable research and practical experience. Always pay attention to local forecasts as those will help you decide to plant at suggested dates or maybe wait a bit if the weather is not acting in a predictable manner.

Planting Dates – Generally, with spring vegetables, the first planting should be made after the danger of frost is over (March 15 for south Louisiana/April 1 for central/north Louisiana).

Seeds/Plants per 100 Feet of Row – The amount of seeds (or the number of plants) given is the minimum amount required to plant a 100-foot row.

Depth to Plant Seeds – This will depend on the seed size and soil type. Small-seeded crops are planted shallower, and crops with larger seeds are planted deeper. Heavy (clay) soils require a shallower depth of planting than do lighter (sandy) soils. This is because clay soils tend to form a crust. If irrigation water is not available and the soil is dry, your seeds may have to be planted a little deeper than normal. Generally speaking, most seeds should be planted two to three times as deep as they are wide.

Space Between Plants – Correct spacing between and within rows is important to allow for proper growth, cultivation and efficient use of space. It is also important to follow the recommended spacing because planting too close can be more enticing to insects and enables diseases to spread easier between plants. Additionally, planting too closely will result in poor, weak growth and lower yields. It is a common practice to sow seeds thickly and then thin to the proper spacing. Allow for unplanted rows between watermelon, pumpkin and cantaloupe plantings. In the home garden, you can plant on every other row and space these plants 4-6 feet apart. For intensive culture or "wide row" gardening, use the larger "in row" spacing and allow enough room between rows so that when the plants are mature, they will barely be touching those in the neighboring row. Remember that yield, quality and pest control normally will be superior if plants are given plenty of room to grow.

Days Until Harvest – The number of days from planting until harvest depends on the variety selected, the seasonal temperatures, seasonal rainfall, cultural practices and whether the crop was direct-seeded or transplanted. The number of days indicated in these charts are average ranges that can be expected.

<https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/bneely/articles/page1481835882715>

Louisiana Vegetable Planting Guide



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

Happy Mother's Day from your FYZICAL New Orleans and St. Bernard team!



PATIENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT!



It really made a difference in my lifestyle!

"I was very happy with the service provided. The staff was very nice and helpful. It really made a difference in my lifestyle. I am able to get back to doing the things I enjoy. Also, it was very helpful that they have a Spanish speaking person and translation services. It was a clean and organized place. Thank you FYZICAL for helping me get back to living again with less pain." - Elisabeth R.



Are you in pain? Have you sustained an injury? Give your physical therapist a call today!

NEW ORLEANS CLINIC

504-861-4693

ST. BERNARD CLINIC

504-277-6052

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