



PENINSULA

SPINE AND JOINT CLINIC

CARDIOANALYTICS

Tamar Science Park

Derriford

Plymouth

PL6 8BU

krw@peninsulaclinic.co.uk

www.peninsulaclinic.co.uk

formally York House Clinic

01752 727297

Easy Gardening Tips

With the sunshine out come the mower, the spade, the wheelbarrow and all the other garden implements for the Spring.

Lets make the most of it then by avoiding an aching back with a few simple preventative measures.

Don't Start Cold!

You wouldn't rev your car engine on a cold morning after a long rest so don't stress your back by doing the most difficult job first. Warm up a bit first by making sure you are wrapped up and go for a 5-minute walk. Do the easier jobs, preferably ones at above ground level, first. Save heavy jobs for later in the day – most back pain begins first thing in the morning.

Build Up to a Long Stint in the Garden.

Gardening is exercise; if you have done very little over the Winter then don't try to pick up where you left off last Summer. Take it easy and do short periods of work in the garden. When you have finished go for a gentle stroll – this will help prevent you from stiffening up.

Try to avoid Torque!

Torque is the rotating motion that takes place in our backs if we twist and don't move our feet. Easily done if you are forking over some ground or turning the compost. Most backs will complain if you twist and bend – keep your shoulders above and in line with your hips. This is especially important when using hover mowers.

Push don't Pull

If you have any choice at all push a heavy load rather than pull it. A very typical injury seen in my office occurs after someone has pulled up a stubborn bush or pulled something heavy along the ground. This puts a lot more stress on the low back.

© Keith Walker ~ Peninsula Spine and Joint Clinic 2009

Pace yourself.

Rome was not built in a day – it took at least two! Gardening should be a pleasure not a race so make sure you set yourself reasonable targets and be firm with yourself about when to stop. Don't forget that an hour of gardening too much today may mean weeks of back pain beginning tomorrow.

Vary your tasks.

If cutting the grass gives you back ache, cut half the lawn, go and do something else at a different height like pruning a tree and then go back to mow the second half. If you have to lean over doing fiddly things like pricking out in the greenhouse stagger it with another job that requires a bit of movement.

Listen to your own common sense.

How many times have I heard the phrase – “I knew I shouldn't have done it” – as someone explains a daft lift or some activity that they knew was risky. Gardeners pride themselves on common sense – use yours.

Phone 01752 727297 for your FREE assessment.