

SUMMER UPDATE

Back-Saving Gardening Tips

Author: CCA Staff Team Date: Apr 29, 2015

Warmer temperatures and sunny days have finally arrived and so have the first flowers of spring! This might entice you to do a bit of gardening. Understandably, most gardeners are anxious to plunge their hands into the dirt and get growing. Gardening can be an extremely rewarding pastime, but it can also come with an increased risk of aches and pains if you're not careful. We've put together a few tips to help you maximize your joy of gardening while minimizing the risk of pain.

- 1. Warm up:** After waiting all winter, it may be tempting to jump right into the spring garden cleanup. Do your future self a favour and pause to warm up your muscles before you start the work. Like any other physical activity, gardening requires preparing your body for the new movements. In fact, over the winter months, you may have become de-conditioned and will require some time before you can invest yourself into a regular gardening routine. [Straighten Up Canada](#) only takes 3 minutes and helps to improve your posture and keeps you moving.
- 2. Take breaks:** When you're in the zone, one can lose track of time. Hungry to see results, you might just plow through the work without paying attention to your body's cues. However, it's wise to pace yourself instead of powering through to get the job done. Set a timer and take a break every 15-20 minutes to stand up, stretch and walk around a bit rather than staying in the same position for extended periods of time.
- 3. Drink water:** Hydration is always important, but especially when you are physically active under the sun. Carry a bottle of water along with your garden tools. When you take your break every 15-20 minutes, have a drink of water, too
- 4. Breathe:** While you're stretching and hydrating, take in some deep, oxygenating breaths to nourish your hard-working muscles and help to improve circulation. Keep your shoulders and chest relaxed. When breathing deeply, you should see your abdomen extend out and then in calmly.



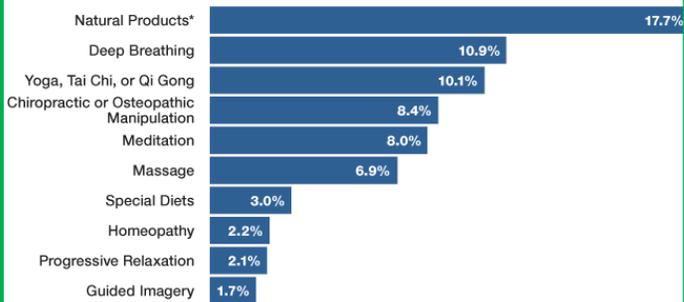
Back-Saving Tips: Gardening

- 5. Listen to your body:** It's easy to get caught up in the sheer joy of getting your hands dirty. Gardening can be very meditative, in fact. However, be careful not to get so lost in the task that you ignore those niggling aches and pains until it's too late. Pay attention to the messages your body is sending you. If you feel a twinge, take a break or change positions.
- 6. Be mindful of large loads:** Bags of mulch and soil or heavy potted plants come with the territory. Instead of lugging a whole bag of soil from one end of the garden to the other, consider using a wheeled cart. Divide large loads into smaller batches that are easier to handle. If you must lift something heavy, consider asking for help, or check out [these pointers on how to lift properly without injuring your back](#).
- 7. Vary your tasks:** Rather than concentrating on one area or job at a time, vary your tasks to ensure that you aren't holding the same position for extended periods.

Gardening can be a lot of work, but it's also a great source of pleasure and beauty, all the more so when you feel in top physical condition! In the meantime, take a look at the [Resources](#) section of our website to learn more about how to [Plant and Rake Without the Ache](#) and other useful tips to stay healthy doing the activities you love.

Complementary, Alternative or Integrative Health?

10 most common complementary health approaches among adults—2012



*Dietary supplements other than vitamins and minerals.
 Source: Clarke TC, Black LI, Stussman BJ, Barnes PM, Nahin RL. Trends in the use of complementary health approaches among adults—United States, 2002–2012. National health statistics reports, no 79. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics; 2015.

What do the terms, “complementary,” “alternative,” and “*integrative*,” mean? These are terms that are often used outside of traditional medicine, or treatment under an MD (Medical Doctor)

Complementary Versus Alternative

Many Americans—more than 30 percent of adults and about 12 percent of children—use health care approaches developed outside of mainstream Western, or conventional, medicine. When describing these approaches, people often use “alternative” and “complementary” interchangeably, but the two terms refer to different concepts:

- If a non-mainstream practice is used **together with conventional medicine**, it’s considered “complementary.”
- If a non-mainstream practice is used **in place of conventional medicine**, it’s considered “alternative.”

True alternative medicine is uncommon. Most people who use non-mainstream approaches use them along with conventional treatments.

Integrative Medicine: There are many definitions of “integrative” health care, but all involve bringing conventional and complementary approaches together in a coordinated way. The use of integrative approaches to health and wellness has grown within care settings across the United States. Researchers are currently exploring the potential benefits of integrative health in a variety of situations, including pain management for military personnel and veterans, relief of symptoms in cancer patients and survivors, and programs to promote healthy behaviors.

Chiropractic, as what is called a CAM. **Complementary Alternative Medicine.** It is a health care profession that focuses on the relationship between the body’s structure—mainly the spine—and its functioning. Although practitioners may use a variety of treatment approaches, they primarily perform adjustments (manipulations) to the spine or other parts of the body with the goal of correcting alignment problems, alleviating pain, improving function, and supporting the body’s natural ability to heal itself. Researchers have studied spinal manipulation for a number of conditions ranging from back, neck, and shoulder pain to asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome, fibromyalgia, and headaches. Much of the research has focused on low-back pain, and has shown that spinal manipulation appears to benefit some people with this condition.

A 2010 review of scientific evidence on manual therapies for a range of conditions concluded that spinal manipulation/mobilization may be helpful for several conditions in addition to back pain, including migraine and cervicogenic (neck-related) headaches, neck pain, upper- and lower-extremity joint conditions, and whiplash-associated disorders. The review also identified a number of conditions for which spinal manipulation/mobilization appears not to be helpful (including asthma, hypertension, and menstrual pain) or the evidence is inconclusive (e.g., fibromyalgia, mid-back pain, premenstrual syndrome, sciatica, and temporomandibular joint disorders).

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

Choose Chiropractic

Think differently about staying healthy!

A 7-year study showed that patients whose primary physician was a Chiropractor experienced the following results:

- 60%** Less hospital admissions
- 59%** Less days in hospital
- 62%** Less outpatient surgeries
- 85%** Less in pharmaceutical costs

Source: Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics; May 2007, 30(4); 263-269. Richard L. Sarret, M.D., James Winterstein D.C., Jennilyn A. Cambron D.C., PhD

• Agency for Health Care Policy and Research. *Chiropractic in the United States: Training, Practice, and Research*. Rockville, MD: Agency for Health Care Policy and Research; 1997. AHCPR publication no. 98–N002.

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• Bronfort G, Haas M, Evans R, et al. Effectiveness of manual therapies: the UK evidence report. *Chiropractic & Osteopathy*. 2010;18(3):1–33.

• Cassidy JD, Boyle E, Côté P, et al. Risk of vertebrobasilar stroke and chiropractic care: results of a population-based case-control and case-crossover study. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*. 2009;32(2):87–92. PMID: 19208. (Reprinted from *Spine*)

Resource: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/integrative-health>

Alternatives to Ibuprofen

Ibuprofen and similar drugs fall under a category of Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drug (NSAIDs). These drugs are readily available both over the counter and by prescription. NSAIDs are commonly used in a number of painful conditions such as arthritis, menstrual cramps, back pain. The bottom line is, it's very common to use such things as ibuprofen for pain relief and to help with inflammation. NSAIDs have side-effects that are well documented. **Possible risks of all NSAIDs include, among others:**

- Stomach problems like bleeding, ulcer and stomach upset;
- High blood pressure;
- Fluid retention (causing swelling, such as around the lower legs, feet, ankles and hands);
- Kidney problems;
- Heart problems; and
- Rashes.

Many patients come into the office asking about some alternatives to the use of NSAIDs.

1. **Boswellia:** Comes of a boswellia serrata tree. The anti-inflammatory properties come from the boswellic acid. This acid improves blood flow to the joints and prevents inflammatory white blood cells from entering injured tissue. For pain and inflammation a recommended dosage is usually 400-700 mg daily for 3-4 weeks
2. **Capsaicin:** The active ingredient in chili peppers. It is often used topically to decrease nerve, muscle and joint pain. It works by interfering with Substance P, a chemical that helps transmit pain signals to the brain. It's used as a gel/cream with 0.0025% to 0.075% and it is usually applied three to four times daily. It can cause some stinging and burning initially, but it usually subsides with use.
3. **Curcumin:** Curcumin is a component of the herb turmeric, and it is a potent painkiller that can block proteins in the body that cause inflammation and also stops the neurotransmitter, Substance P, from sending pain messages to the brain. Studies show that it is effective in easing chronic pain of rheumatoid arthritis. A dosage could range from 400 to 600 mg taken three times a day for pain and inflammation.
4. **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Omega-3 fatty acids have anti-inflammatory properties that have been proven beneficial for people who suffer with arthritis, other inflammatory joint conditions, and inflammatory bowel diseases. Omega-3 also reduce cardiovascular risk, which is especially helpful for people with rheumatoid arthritis, which carries an increased risk for cardiovascular disease. A suggested dose is 1000 mg daily.



5. **White willow bark:** This is the predecessor of aspirin. White willow bark contains salicin, which converts salicylic acid in the stomach. White willow bark is much less irritating to the stomach than the synthetic drug, aspirin, while it works to relieve pain, inflammation and fever. A suggested dose is 1-3 dropper-fuls of white willow bark tincture daily.
6. **DMSO:** Sulphur containing compound that is derived from MSM and can be used both internally and externally. It can be used to help with sprained ankles, sore muscles and joints. It works really well in capsaicin.

Arnica Montana: *Arnica montana* is sometimes grown in herb gardens. The roots contain derivatives of thymol, which are used as fungicides and preservatives and may have some anti-inflammatory effect. When used topically in a gel at 50% concentration, *A. montana* was found to have the same effect when compared to a 5% ibuprofen gel for treating the symptoms of hand osteoarthritis. (Reference: I. Weremczuk-Jezyna, W. Kisiel & H. Wysokińska; Kisiel; Wysokińska (2006). "Thymol derivatives from hairy roots of *A. montana*". *Plant Cell Reports* **25** (9): 993-6. doi:10.1007/s00299-006-0157-y. PMID 16586074.)
7. **Devil`s Claw:** South African herb that is known to be effective for arthritis and muscle pain.
8. **Cat`s Claw:** South American, it contains an anti-inflammatory agent that blocks the production of prostaglandins that contribute to inflammation and pain. Suggested doses are between 250 to 1000 mg capsules, 1-3 times daily. Taking too high of a dose can lead to diarrhea.

Watermelon Gazpacho

With summer just around the corner, soups can be something that can be made with summer's fresh harvest ingredients and also help us cool down. Here's a recipe for Watermelon Gazpacho.

Ingredients

- 1 large red bell pepper
- 1 ear corn
- 1 pound (454 g) chopped seedless watermelon
- 2 1/2 pounds (1.1 kg) ripe red heirloom tomatoes, rough chop
- 1 pound (454 g) English cucumber, peeled, rough chop
- 1 chipotle in adobo, seeded, coarsely chopped
- 2 teaspoons chipotle adobo sauce
- 2 scallions, white and green parts
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 3 Tablespoons (45 ml) lime juice
- 1/3 cup (5 g) cilantro leaves, roughly chopped
- 2 Tablespoons (30 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 2 1/2 teaspoons Kosher salt

Directions

1. Roast the red bell pepper over an open flame until blackened. Put into a paper bag for 5 minutes then peel off charred skin and remove seeds and stem. Roast corn over flame, turning frequently until the corn is charred.
2. Roughly chop the roasted red pepper and cut the corn off the cob. Combine in a large-size bowl with the watermelon, tomatoes, and cucumber.
3. Add the chipotle, adobo sauce, scallions, garlic, lime juice, cilantro, olive oil, kosher salt and lightly mix.
4. Transfer the mixture in batches to the a blender container and secure lid
5. Run the blender on low and then turn machine on and slowly increase speed to High.
6. Blend for 30 seconds or so until a soup-like consistency.
7. Transfer to a pitcher and thoroughly chill before serving.

ENJOY!!



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