

## SPRINGING INTO THE GARDENING SEASON – IT’S A STRETCH!

After a long winter we’re often eager to switch our bags of salt for bags of soil. We just can’t wait to get out into the garden and begin digging, raking, lifting, and planting. However, without the right preparation you could end up with stiff, sore joints and muscles, back pain or injuries. Don’t let your enthusiasm put an early end to your gardening season. Here are a few stretching tips that will allow you to safely enjoy the fruits of your labour.

Warm-up with a short walk, then gently repeat each of the following stretches five times. Hold all stretches for 15 to 20 seconds. Stop if it is painful.

**Thigh Stretch:** With one hand on the wall or a tree, bend your left knee then reach back and hold your ankle with your right hand. Pull your heel toward your buttocks and hold. Relax and repeat with the other leg.

**Back Stretch:** Sit on a chair and slowly bend your body forward from your hips, putting your head down and resting your hands on the floor. Hold, then relax.

**Shoulder Rolls:** With your arms hanging loosely at your sides, slowly rotate your shoulders in a circular motion forward, then backward.

**Wrist Flexion:** Hold one arm straight out as if you were giving a ‘stop’ signal, use your opposite hand to hold this position. Hold. Repeat with the other hand

