



# Keep Fit with Gardening



Gardening helps keep us fit. It works and stretches our muscles. It can be **hard** on other parts of the body, especially our back and knees.

## Don't overdo it!!

### General Advice:

- Start with short bursts of 30 minutes, 2 or 3 times a week. If you feel okay after this, increase the time (don't double it!).
- Change activities after 10 minutes.
- Keep a bottle of water with you and sip regularly (dehydration causes headaches and tiredness).
- Avoid gardening at the hottest time of the day in full sun.
- Remember your hat and sunscreen.



### Advice to save your back and knees:

- Stop and stretch (especially your back and knees).
- If kneeling, use a cushion.
- Kneel or get on your hands and knees while doing activities, rather than bend over.
- Kneel for maximum of 15 minutes, then change activity
- Install raised beds.
- If you have trouble getting down to the ground and up, use a 'kneeler' with handles, or leave a solid chair in the garden areas so you always have a support to use getting up – and somewhere to sit once you do get up!
- Do all jobs as close to your body as possible eg weed with your hands close to you, not reaching out
- Carry all loads close to your body.
- Don't overfill bags you have to carry, eg weeds compost – use a wheelbarrow or sack barrow
- Use the 'lunge' rocking movement using your legs when raking or sweeping – it's much easier on your back than stretching and bending.
- If you have sore or disabled hands you can get gardening equipment to suit.

Our friendly physios and occupational therapists can help, contact us as follows:

**Ph:** 377 5280  
**Email:** [admin@tpl.nz](mailto:admin@tpl.nz)  
**Website:** [www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz](http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz)

