



## Post-Gardening Stretches

with Stacy L. Walters, RTK

You may notice that your low back, legs, and wrists feel stiff after an afternoon of gardening. Stretching will help balance those muscle groups that may have been overused, and decrease this post-gardening soreness.

In order to achieve maximum results, stretching should be done immediately after physical activity when your muscles are warm and more elastic.

### Benefits of Post-Gardening Stretching

- Increased range of motion decreasing the risk of injuries and encouraging improved biomechanics for the next gardening session
- Muscle tension release which alleviates muscle stress, improves posture and reduces next-day soreness
- Increased blood and nutrient flow for healthier joints and cartilage
- Improved neuromuscular coordination resulting in better balance and coordination

Routinely performing these stretches will encourage muscle balance, improved biomechanics and proper posture - ultimately allowing you to better enjoy your time in the garden!

### Dynamic Posture Cues

- Naval in
- Zip up rib cage
- Shoulders back
- Shoulder blades down
- Chin in

my gym is green

### 1 Hip Flexor Muscles (front of the thigh) and Shoulders

Repeatedly bending at the hip is common while gardening. To stretch the muscles involved with this motion, begin in the kneeling position, and bring the right leg forward. Take a step forward and gently lean into the stretch keeping your shoulders square to the front. You should feel the stretch high in the back leg. If you feel balanced, bring your left arm across your body to stretch your shoulder.

Hold for 30 seconds then switch sides.



### 2 Hamstrings (back of the thigh) and Wrists

Kneeling and lunging around the yard really gives your legs a work out, so it's important to stretch those hamstrings!

Begin by sitting on the floor close to the wall. Bring your seat close to the wall with your legs to the side and simply lengthen your legs up the wall as you lie down.

The goal is to keep your seat close to the wall and touching the floor. Let gravity take over. Hold this stretch up to 60 seconds.

Give the wrist muscles a stretch by clasping your hands and creating a figure 8 and reverse directions.



### 3 Piriformis (low back and hip area) and Neck

To stretch the muscles in the low back and hip area, lie on your back with your feet on the floor. Cross the right ankle over the left knee and lift your left foot off the floor. Pull your left knee toward your chest, then gently shift your weight to the left taking nice, deep breaths. Stretch your neck muscles at the same time by rolling your head on the floor and looking side to side.

Hold the stretch for 30 seconds then switch legs



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### 4 Cat Stretch

Begin this stretch on your hands and knees with a flat back. Tuck your pelvis forward and aim your tailbone toward the floor, at the same time tuck your chin toward your chest and round the entire back. Hold this stretch for 10 seconds and breathe comfortably. Return to a flat back and repeat this stretch 5 times.



### 5 Chest

While gardening, we spend a lot of time lifting, carrying and reaching, which causes the shoulders to hang forward. To stretch this area and improve your posture, begin by standing about 2 feet away from the corner of a room. Place one foot forward and both forearms on the wall. Your arms should be bent 90 degrees with your elbows as high as your shoulders. Gently lean forward and hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Pull your naval in to protect your back and keep your chin tucked in.

