

Yoga for Gardeners Guidelines

Yogic Principles - Be mindful at all times and stay within your comfortable range of motion. Coordinate breathe with movements, inhale to expand the torso, exhale to compress, breathe deeply, naturally and rhythmically.

Balance, Strength and Flexibility - Use complementary, active and passive movements to increase body-mind-spirit connection/proprioception. Honor the 5 directions of movement; up/axial extension, arch/hyper-extension, down/flexion, side to side/laterals and twists/spirals.

Know Your Limitations - Learn how to prevent and treat common ailments. Follow your physician's advice and manage chronic conditions. Tend to your body well as you tend to your garden for a long term healthy relationship.

Fitness Safety - Use yoga to prepare for gardening, warming up to lessen the risk of injury. During gardening, focus on your movements, use your core muscles, breathe properly and bring your spine back into neutral alignment often. Release tension with timely yoga stretches.

Pace Yourself - Build stamina gradually by exercising and gardening regularly. Take breaks, step back to observe or meditate on your work. Rest, walk around the garden or perform a different task every 15-20 minutes.

Change Positions Often - Try several movements, methods and tools for gardening tasks to prevent overuse of muscles. If you feel discomfort or faint, stop immediately.

Stay Hydrated - If you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated! Remember to keep a bottle of water or refreshing drink nearby.

Be Ambidextrous - We favor our dominant side but some chores such as raking or weeding can easily be switched. It may feel awkward at first but will bring about a more balanced body.

Know When to Stop - We often become absorbed in a project and ignore the warning signs of discomfort or stress that can cause pain the next day. Break big jobs into smaller tasks.

Wear the Right Clothing - Having the right pair of gloves, shoes, jacket, etc. can make the difference in making the work pleasant or NOT.

Choose Quality Tools - Basic tools come in various sizes and weight, find the right fit for you and for the task. Having a good selection of quality tools is a MUST.

Garden Design - For best results, create a 'master plan' that includes areas for various activities and leisure. A plan will help you stay on track; rather it's completed in one season or several years. Match your garden design to your level of fitness and time.

Edibles in the Landscape - Find a permanent home for perennial edibles in your landscape that will reward you for years. Experiment with ways to grow annuals easily and successfully.

Explore Ideas - Consider use of various hardscapes. Trees, shrubs and perennials are the living backbone of the garden, which thrive with low-maintenance yet are 'great performers'. Keep high-maintenance plants where they are more visible and accessible.

Timely Chores - For a more manageable and healthy garden, learn the proper time and techniques to seed, transplant, prune, fertilize, weed, etc.

Ergonomic Workspace - The closer the relationship between the growing areas, water source, garden tools, potting bench, compost pile, etc. the greater the functionality.

