



## Tend to Your Bones When Tending the Garden

### Below are some steps you can take while in the garden.

Many people enjoy gardening as a favorite hobby or pastime, but it also offers a relaxing way to get exercise and vitamin D from time in the sun. We want you to really enjoy your time digging into the garden, so here are some helpful tips while in the weeds.

#### BEFORE YOU START

**Talk to your doctor.** Typical gardening activities, like walking or squatting, are good ways to stay active, but they could also require a lot of bending. Be sure to consult your osteoporosis doctor to learn if you need to take any special precautions.

**Do some light stretching.** This will help prepare your body for the physical activity.

**Make safety a priority.** Wear sturdy, rubber-soled shoes for traction and when possible, work at a waist-high table. When gardening on the ground, consider sitting on a low step stool to limit bending. These modifications can help make gardening safer and easier.

#### WHILE YOU'RE GARDENING

**Move slowly and cautiously.** Avoid frequent bends, abrupt twists, long reaches, and lifting heavy objects. While gardening, it's important to keep your spine straight and avoid hunching your shoulders. If you do need to pick something up from the ground, squat down with a straight spine, and use your leg muscles to stand back up. To help avoid lifting and hunching, you can opt for a narrow, elevated bed or a raised container garden.

**Plant with your bones in mind.** Forgo fast-growing plants that require a lot of pruning and staking. Instead, choose low-maintenance varieties, such as ornamental grasses and lilies.

**Let tools do the work.** The right equipment can take the strain off your body. Use lightweight, long-handled tools that are easy to lift and reduce the need to bend. Buy a children's wagon or garden trolley to transport watering cans and plant food.

**Admire the fruits (and flowers) of your labor ...** and know you've been cautious with your bones.

