

Time to Prep for Spring

*Ron Knickrehm, PT, CEAS
Ergonomic Specialist*

Believe it or not, spring is just around the corner. Before you know it, those leaves that came down after the first snow will be calling you and those spring flowers will be demanding attention. Now is the time to prepare yourself to tolerate the rigorous physical activity demanded by your yard and flower garden. Do you remember last year when you started your yard work and could barely move the next few days due to sore muscles and general aches and pains? Now is the time to start getting in shape to minimize those aches and pains.

Tips when starting an exercise program:

- Consult your physician to be sure you are physically OK to start exercise
- Consider using a qualified trainer or other health care professional to begin.
- Begin with gentle stretching with no pain to warm the muscle up
- When stretching, avoid bouncing or jerking the muscles
- Go slowly, stretching for 10 to 30 seconds for each repetition
- A little muscle soreness is OK but avoid lingering pain or radiating pain, numbness, tingling, weakness or anything that causes incoordination.

Tips for helping you to be successful:

- Set realistic and measurable goals.
- Start slowly
- Schedule time for exercises and make it a priority.
- Have an alternate plan for type of exercise
- Have a place to exercise that is independent of weather changes.
- Alternate exercises activities to give your body some recovery time.
- Plan to gradually increase repetitions, resistance and duration of your program.
- Treat yourself with nonfood related rewards for reaching your goals.