

Don't overdo it

Weeding can cause back pain and overuse injuries. Suggestions include:

- Avoid marathon weeding sessions.
- Warm up before weeding with slow, sustained stretches and remember to do basic backstretches during your weeding.
- Rotate your tasks to avoid repetitive movements; for example, after 15 minutes of raking, swap to pruning for a while.
- Rest frequently and relax in the shade with a long drink of water.

Avoid uncomfortable positions.

Hand safety

Many weeding injuries involve the hands and fingers. Suggestions include:

- Always wear gardening gloves to protect your hands against cuts, soil, insect bites and skin irritants. Leather gloves offer protection against puncture injuries from thorns and bites (insect, snake or rodent).

- Use appropriate tools (shovel or hand shovel) instead of your fingers. Buried objects such as tree roots can injure your hand, wrist or arm while digging.

- Consult with your doctor about keeping your tetanus vaccination up to date. Cuts and puncture injuries carry a risk of tetanus.

- Avoid buying or using hand tools that feature 'molded' handles. Blisters, calluses and muscle pain can occur if the finger grips on the handle are too small or too large for your hand.

- Keep your hand and wrist in a straight line when you use hand tools. Bending the wrist weakens your grip on the tool, which causes you to exert hand and arm muscles with greater force. This can cause fatigue and soft tissue injury.

Use rubber gloves when working with garden chemicals. Always inspect the rubber gloves for holes or tears before use.

Always follow the directions!

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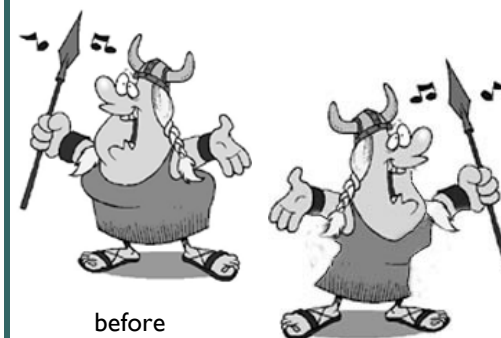
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Weeding for Weight Loss

Good for You—Good for the Environment

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before

after

MORE WEEDING, LESS FEEDING

You CAN lose weight by weeding~ eat less and move more! The following list shows what a typical man weighing 180 pounds will burn in 30 minutes of activity. If you weigh more you can burn even more calories!

- Weeding ~ 182
- Raking~ 162
- Bagging leaves~ 162
- Planting seeds/seedlings~ 162
- Clearing Land ~ 202
- Digging, spading, tilling~ 202
- General gardening~ 202
- Gardening with heavy power tools~ 243
- Mowing the lawn with a push mower~ 243

To reap the fitness benefits of weeding, you have to do more than just putter around. The most energetic activities in terms of the calories used are digging and shoveling.

Some former fitness enthusiasts have found that activities in the garden actually mimic the type of exercise that they do in the gym. For example, turning compost has been likened to lifting weights. Raking has been likened to using a rowing machine and using the mower to walking on a treadmill.

"Working your limbs is healthy and helps you to relax as opposed to head work which can cause stress".

WEEDING EXERCISE TIPS:

Get more from your weeding by following a few basic rules:

- Start your session with simple warm up exercises
- Take stretching breaks in between your exercises
- Alternate limbs as you work
- Take deep breaths during your resting periods
- Carry out a variety of garden tasks - don't overdo any one activity
- Always bend your knees and keep your back straight when lifting

- Aim for a total of 30 minutes weeding exercise when you start
- Break your weeding session into small chunks of time

DOING IT CORRECTLY

Do make sure that you bend your knees

Do use your thigh muscles to take the strain

Don't twist your back round while you are holding the load

Do use your whole body to turn.

Don't forget to bend your knees when lowering it back to the floor.

The same advice holds for pulling up weeds.



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