

WELLNESS CONNECTION

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INSPIRE TO MOVE - Gardening is Exercise!



Photo Credit: Clayton Stalter UIS PhotoShelter Gallery

By Colleen Crawford

Spring is here, offering many opportunities to step outside and move in ways that were not accessible through the cold winter months. One of the joys that comes with warmer weather is the emergence of spring flowers, tree buds, green grasses, and more. Gardening is a wonderful way to combine the beautification of your outdoor environment with moving your body in the fresh air.

Whether you tend a large vegetable garden or adorn your space with flowers in containers and hanging pots, caring for your plants will have you moving your muscles in ways that are likely different from your typical

daily routine. These novel movements can help wake your body up from its winter hibernation and prepare you for the often more active spring and summer. Although you might not think of your gardening tasks as a workout, remember to be mindful of your posture as you bend, stretch, and lift your way to beautiful blooms and bountiful veggies.

Gardening uses the large muscle groups in your body, meaning you will feel the burn in your legs, back, abs, and arms during a gardening session. Some exercises that can prepare your body for a vigorous gardening season include [deadlifts/hip-hinge movement pattern](#), [weighted carries](#), [lunges](#), [rows](#), [push-ups](#) or [planks](#), [chops](#), and [squats](#). You can perform these exercises with equipment, household items, or without equipment and household items. All of these

movements are mimicked while gardening as you lift plants and bags of soil and then set them down, rake to prepare your plot, and dig holes for planting. After gardening, you might consider stretching with this [30-minute yoga practice for gardeners](#).

If you are not sure where to start with gardening, or want to deepen your knowledge in various gardening topics, the University of Illinois Extension has an extensive library of resources to support your learning. The [Gardener's Corner](#) features an archive of articles grouped by season. The [Four Seasons Gardening webinar series](#) offers live webinars (registration required) that are also available as recordings on the [Illinois Extension Horticulture YouTube](#) channel. Additional helpful information can be found on the [Gardening Resources](#) page.

