

## Tips for a Safe and Healthy Spring Season

Spring 2008 has arrived! Daylight savings is in effect. Days are longer and warmer. Vibrant colored flowers are bursting out of the nursery stores. Home improvement stores are filling their parking lot with over stocked flowers, shrubs and trees - all in hopes that the consumers have the itch to get out of their houses and into their yards!

But before you fill the car with those plants, order the truck load of mulch, or dust off your weekend warrior gardening attire, let's review some tips that will ensure a safe and injury free spring planting season:

1. **Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate!** Drink a glass of water **before** you set foot outside. Remember, once you feel the first signs of thirst, you are already experiencing the first signs of dehydration! Make sure you continue drinking water often throughout the day. That Texas heat can sneak up on a person.
2. **Pace Yourself!** It's imperative to take frequent breaks. Once muscles become fatigued, correct body mechanics are the first things to go, increasing the possibility of injury. Remind yourself to take frequent breaks ~ a great excuse to sip on some water and admire your work!
3. **Watch The Heavy Lifting!** Those mulch bags can get heavy!
  1. Size up the object to be lifted. Decide how best to get a good grip on it with balanced distribution.
  2. Plant your feet solidly about 12" apart. Squat down close to the object, bending the knees, but keeping the back straight.
  3. Lift with the large muscles of your legs, thighs, shoulders and arms; NOT with your spine.
  4. Keep the lifting load close to the body and lift with rhythm. Lift carefully.
  5. Avoid lifting from a bending forward position with your legs straight. Bend those knees!
  6. For bulky, awkward or extra heavy loads, get help or use a mechanical device.
  7. When help is at hand, decide what each person is to do in advance so that one is not caught with a sudden, unexpected load to bear.
  8. Be sure you can see where you are going. Have clear vision over the load. Keep floors and yard clear of tripping and falling hazards.
  9. Push - don't pull. You have twice as much power and less chance of injury when you push.

**Use Your Brain!** Don't rely just on your brawn. Utilize the devices that are available in all home improvement centers ~ from heavy duty hand trucks and gardening wagons; portable, light benches with convenient pockets to store gadgets; to simple knee pads.

**Enjoy the spring time and the beautiful weather it brings. Go for a walk. Stop and smell the flowers. Smile. Life is GOOD!**

### Stone Oak Location

The health information contained herein is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a healthcare provider. Decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare provider, considering the unique characteristics of the patient.

### Medical Center Location

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