

# ACCESSIBLE GARDENING TOOLS

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The most important thing to consider in choosing garden tools is your own physical capabilities. You know what your body can and cannot do and you need to apply this knowledge when making tool selections. By letting the tools work with you, rather than against you, you will be able to continue to pursue your love of gardening, conserve energy and avoid unnecessary strain and fatigue.

### Ergonomic Tools:

Ergonomic tools are designed to keep the body in neutral positions to lessen the amount of stress on joints and allow people to work longer and exert less energy.

### Enabling Tools:

Enabling garden tools are specially designed for disabled gardeners. They are specially designed to use less energy and to help keep the body in proper alignment.

### Adapted Tools:

Adapting garden tools is the cheapest way to modify your tools. It doesn't necessarily involve the purchase of any new tools and is especially useful if you have a particular tool that you truly enjoy using but are not able to use lately due to disability.

### Tools in General:

- Use the lightest-weight tool possible to complete tasks.
- Keep tools sharp and in good condition.
- Before you buy it, hold it to make sure it feels right for you.
- Adjustable tools allow you to adopt a variety of postures as you work.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands.
- Use reachers to extend your reach and minimize bending and kneeling.

### Grip:

- Use tools with the right size grip - Make a circle with your index finger and thumb. This will be the size for the right fit.
- Find tools with a depression or ridge in the handle for your thumb to rest on as this will keep your hand and wrist in neutral position.
- Soft padding, reduced vibration and spring loaded power assistive features are all potentially helpful.

### Handles:

- Use tools with soft, pliable, non-slip handles for easier gripping.
- Use loppers or pruners with extra-long or auxiliary handles.
- For small hand tools, shorter tool handles provide greater leverage control.
- Pistol grip handles and telescopic tools are good enabling features.
- Wind baseball tape around the handle of your tool to create a larger surface area to grip.
- If your existing tools have wooden or metal handles, consider adding padded tape or pipe insulation foam.
- Purchase bicycle grips and slide them on to the ends of tool handles.

### Tools to Promote Use of Good Body Mechanics:

- Use nonslip surfaces to not waste energy when gripping tools too tightly.
- Wear the correct foot gear with good support, cushioning, and a deep toe box.
- Arm and wrist braces are good enabling tools.
- Knee pads, kneeling pads and stools/chairs minimize knee problems.
- Reversible kneelers are good for gardeners who need help getting up.

### Seeding and Planting Tips:

- Use a length of PVC pipe and a funnel to plant larger seeds.
- Place small seeds in a spice jar and sprinkle them onto the garden.
- Put seeds into gelatin blocks and then drop them on the ground, the heat of the sun will melt the gelatin leaving the seeds behind to grow.

### Transporting Tools and Supplies:

- Conserve your energy for gardening by safely and easily transporting your tools.
- Use an old golf bag with wheels on it to carry long-handled tools.
- Find a small canvas bag to carry hand tools.
- Make use of a wheelbarrow to transport fertilizer and soil.
- Use a wagon to pull tools to gardening locations.
- Place a decorative mailbox in your garden and store tools there, out of the rain.
- Keep gardening tools on a bench or install hooks on the side of raised bed to hang tools.
- To minimize walking and bending, wear a fisherman's vest or apron to carry around hand tools.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help if an object is too heavy or too cumbersome for you to lift.

### Watering:

- Be vigilant: hoses can be heavy and create tripping hazards.
- Small watering containers, soaker hoses and irrigation systems can help.
- Use watering wand with on-off controls.
- Use watering cans with multiple grip options, a reversible spout, and varied water pressure settings.

Ergonomic Tools..... Enabling Tools..... Adapted Tools.....  
Choose what is best for you and continue to enjoy gardening  
throughout your life!



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