

Welcome to the: Orthopaedic Opinion Online Website

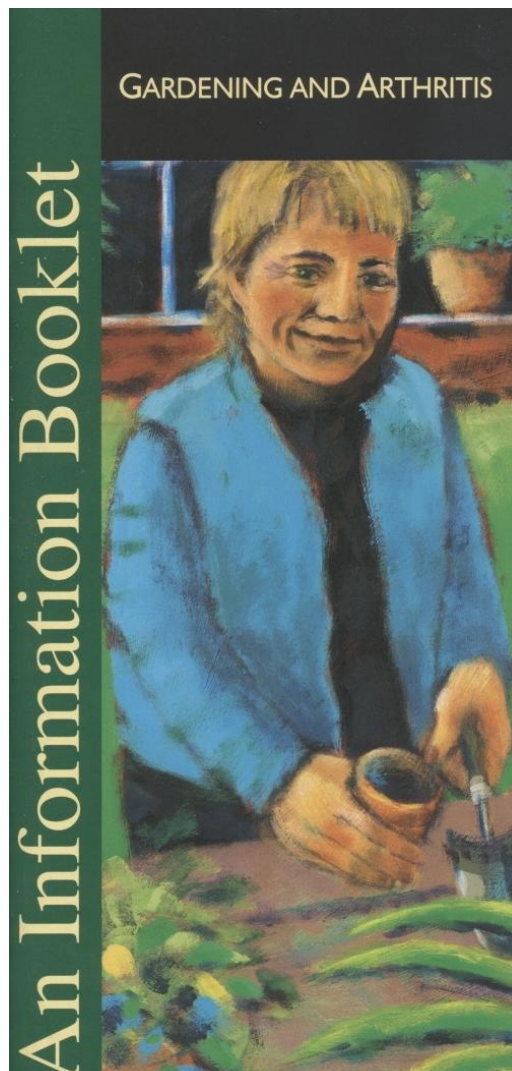
The website for the answer to all your Orthopaedic Questions

- **Orthopaedic Opinion Online** is a website designed to provide information to patients who have orthopaedic and musculoskeletal problems and are undergoing treatment.
- **Patient information** is provided in the form of downloadable information sheets.
- **Orthopaedic advice** and second opinions can be provided by our expert internationally renowned Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons.
- **Online review** of patients' X rays or MRI scans can also be provided and any proposed treatment plans reviewed.
- **Book a clinical consultation** with one of our internationally renowned consultant orthopaedic surgeons in Bristol or London.
- **Orthopaedic reports** can be provided for Injury or Accident Claims and Medical Negligence claims.

This Patient Information Sheet is provided by Orthopaedic Opinion Online

Patient Information:

Gardening and Arthritis



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Gardening and Arthritis

Key words: Arthritis, Hip arthritis, hip joint, hip pain, hip replacement, hip arthroplasty, osteoarthritis, knee arthritis, knee pain, knee replacement, knee arthroplasty.

Link : <http://www.arc.org.uk/arthinfo/patpubs/6014/6014.asp>

Summary

Looking after your garden can be a problem if you have arthritis or rheumatism. Whether your whole body is affected or just one joint, you may find bending difficult or that you cannot get around too well or just suffer from general pain and stiffness.

This booklet shows how you can carry on gardening, whether you have a painful hip, swollen fingers and wrists, or a number of damaged joints. You will find ways to protect yourself from unnecessary strain by careful planning.

Pain in the joints and weakness of the muscles make it difficult to garden in the conventional way, but there are a number of means to overcome these hindrances. You can use different gardening methods, change the layout of paths and beds, select plants carefully and choose the right tools. It is important to use lightweight implements or ones which have extended handles. There is a wide variety of garden tools designed to make cultivation, weeding, pruning and tidying up easier. It may be important to handle tools before buying, so that you can test them for lightness and balance. If possible, try them out on the soil to make sure they feel right and that you can manage them properly.

Because arthritis comes in many forms, and varies in severity and extent, all the suggestions offered cannot be appropriate for everyone. A gardener whose stiff knee gives minor discomfort when they are digging will change his/her techniques to place less strain on the knee. Someone with widespread arthritis, however, may have to work from a wheelchair or a stool. One has to accept much greater limitations than the other – yet both can enjoy gardening to the full. On some days you feel much better than on others and this affects your attitude to gardening as well as to everything else.

Protecting your joints

Gardening provides plenty of opportunities for healthy exercise in the fresh air and in pleasant surroundings, but overdoing things leads to inflammation, swelling and pain, making it necessary to rest completely until the flare-up subsides. The aim is to stay mobile and independent by gently exercising arthritic joints without subjecting them to too much stress. The amount of exercise will vary from one person to another. A general guideline is 'a little and often'. Prolonged activity of a repetitive nature is not a good idea. Your own experience will tell you how to get the balance right.

By changing jobs frequently you can exercise different sets of muscles. For example, a short spell of hoeing weeds on the vegetable plot should be followed by something gentler like pricking out seedlings while sitting at a bench in the greenhouse. It is tempting to carry on with one job until it is completed, but it is sensible to switch from one to another with rest periods in-between.

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