

Exercise and Yard Work

Take a look at your yard. Is your lawn well-manicured? Are your leaves raked? Are your gutters cleaned? Keeping up on outside chores not only improves your curbside appeal, but can also boost your overall health.

The Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC) recommends physical activity such as mowing the yard or picking up sticks for relieving arthritis pain.

Two-and-a-half hours of moderate activity per week, says the CDC, can help reduce pain and improve function, mood and quality of life for adults with arthritis.

It can also help manage other chronic conditions among adults with arthritis, such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

STRETCH AND HYDRATE

Before setting out on an afternoon of yard work, be sure to stretch your muscles to prepare your body and avoid straining. You will also want to stretch a few times during and after your yard work to avoid stiffening.

Stretch your legs, arms and lower back in particular, since these are the areas most impacted by yard and gardening work.

Drink plenty of water before, during and after your outdoor exercise, as well. Staying hydrated will help your muscles work properly.

CARDIO

If your yard is manageable, opt for the push mower instead of the rider every once in a while. Adding 30 minutes of this type of cardio activity can burn hundreds of calories and get your heart rate increased to an effective rate.

Opt also for the rake instead of the leaf blower. Taking care of your lawn



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and garden the old-fashioned way will put your body to work while improving your overall health.

STRENGTH

An effective workout implements both cardio and strength routines, so

add a little heavy lifting to your outdoor work. You can burn hundreds of calories by scrubbing your siding, cleaning your gutters, tilling your garden and power-washing your deck.

The built-in aspects of some of these activities – like climbing a lad-

der and lugging bags of leaves to the curb – add even more benefits for your body.

As with any physical activity that requires exertion, pay attention to your body and incorporate as many periods of rest as required.