



**Neuro Café:
Therapeutic benefits of gardening
5th January 2022**

A new year - new growth

- Whatever the season, there's something very therapeutic and welcoming about being out in a garden or growing things indoors.
- Gardening gets harder with a neurological condition and as we age but has many therapeutic benefits and tasks can be adapted
- "Things that I plant and nurture in my little garden have helped me to focus on the future in a positive way, which has made me feel back in control of my life again."
(Parkinson's sufferer)



- You **can garden** using **just one pot**
- you **can start** the **activities** at **any time**
- **gardening** is **good** for **you** and it's **fun!**



Benefit of gardening

A report by the [National Garden Scheme](#) showed that gardening can:

- reduce depression, loneliness, anxiety and stress
 - improve balance which can help to prevent falls
 - alleviate symptoms of dementia
 - improve fitness & strength
- The report suggests garden access has potential to help with healthcare costs, and should be used more in our health and social care system.
 - Many neuro rehab units have gardening groups for their therapeutic benefits

Gardening-

The Ultimate Body & Mind Workout

BODY

(per 30 mins of gardening)

Raking

- works back muscles
- burns 100 calories



Digging/shovelling

- works legs/buttocks
- burns 250 Calories



Weeding

- works triceps
- burns 105 calories



Lawn Mowing

- works arms/shoulders
- burns 195 calories



MIND

Relieves stress

Reduces levels of cortisol
(stress hormone)



Mood enhancer

gardening releases
happy hormones



Reconnects us to nature

Brings a sense of
purpose and
understanding



Better Brain Health

Protects the brain
from ageing



Gardening – as exercise !!

- Gardening is a great form of exercise
- Many physical advantages of gardening,
 - functional strength training
 - balance – multiple planes of movement
 - Stretching
- Gardening can help you to stay **active, fit and flexible**
- You may not always consider gardening to be ‘exercise’ because it is so rewarding and enjoyable - an added bonus really!



The Physical Benefits of Gardening



WEIGHT LOSS



**BLOOD
CIRCULATION**



FLEXIBILITY



**REDUCED
BONE LOSS**



**STRONGER
IMMUNE SYSTEM**



VITAMIN D



STRENGTH



**IMPROVED
COORDINATION**

Gardening and mental wellbeing

- Being in the garden helps you connect with nature, and there's a positive link between gardening and mental wellbeing.
- Studies have shown that gardeners have reduced levels of the hormone cortisol, which leads to better sleep and lower stress
- **Gardening can:**
 - Reduce depression, anxiety and stress-related symptoms.
 - Alleviate the symptoms of dementia, such as aggressive behaviour.
 - Increase the ability to concentrate and engage.
 - Reduce reliance on medication, self-harming behaviour.



Choose plants and tools to suit you

- Long-handled tools or high-stemmed plants mean less bending.
- Ground cover planting, gravel or shingle can all help reduce weeds, meaning less time kneeling.
- Consider carrying your tools – a simple apron with large pockets, a tool belt or wheelbarrow can save you time and effort.
- Create a relaxing environment with lavender plants or the sound of a water feature.
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The Best Gardening Gadgets



Kneelers:

This [lightweight kneeler from Spear and Jackson](#) features a handle so it's easy to carry. It has five layers of padding which moulds to your knees and gives extra support. Plus it's made from neoprene so is wipe clean, water resistant and quick drying.



Kneelo:

If you don't want to carry a kneeling mat around, then these [gardening kneeling pads from Kneelo](#) could be the solution. Pull them on and forget about them. These stretchy pads are made from neoprene and memory foam and provide protection on the go

The Best Gardening Gadgets cont...



Garden Kneeler Folding Seat Stool with Handles & Tool Bag 3 in 1 The garden kneeler folding seat lets you do both, converting into a kneeler and gardening seat. It folds flat for easy carrying and storage and has a small bag that will fit some gardening tools (such as a trowel and secateurs). Meaning you'll always have the tools you need at a close distance.

Long handled gardening tools – to aid poor balance, bad backs, & improve our posture



Long handled lawn shears Lawns are not as low maintenance as you might think. If you have one, you probably know you need to keep it in shape and we like these long handled lawn shears which stop gardeners from having to bend down.



Spear & Jackson long handled trowel. This back-saving aid is a must-have garden tool. It's weather proof and made to last. In fact, Spear & Jackson (the company who make it) have a range endorsed by the Royal Botanic Garden in Kew so they know what they're talking about!!

Long handled gardening tools – to aid poor balance, bad backs, & improve our posture



[Walensee Stand Up Garden Weeder and Root Removal Tool, Stand up Manual Weeder Hand Tool](#) weeding tool , avoids bending

Improving grip of tools

[Active Hands General Purpose Gripping Aid](#) is designed for people who are gardening with a weak grip. It has adjustable wrist straps and hand covers, pulling your hand into a fist shape. They're available for the left and right hand.



Improving grip of tools

Easi-Grip Peta Arm Support Cuff. Cheaper, it's made from plastic and slots onto your arm. It connects to all Easi-Grip gardening tools which have ergonomic easy



Adapt your garden

- Widening pathways may help, especially if you use a wheelchair or walking aid.
- Narrowing flower beds reduces the distance you have to reach.
- Raised beds mean you don't have to bend so far to tend to plants or vegetables.



Vegetable Gardening

- **Raised Vegetable Beds:**
- Easy 'quick win' vegetables to grow:
 - beetroot
 - radish
 - chard
 - salad leaves
 - spring onions
 - peas
 - beansare great to grow in raised vegetable beds.
- All these vegetables can be directly sown in April or May and you can start harvesting around five weeks later.





Virtual garden visits

National Garden Scheme

- If visiting gardens is difficult National Garden Scheme during first lockdown created virtual garden visits
- 190 clips of gardens
- <https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/>
- Going in person- benefit of visiting a garden National Garden Scheme garden is money is raised for their beneficiaries for example Parkinson's UK, the more visitors the more money donated!

The *gardening* for health charity

London, Battersea Park



Other ways to get involved



Individuals

Volunteering with our client groups or in our sales kiosk

Corporates

Partnerships, volunteering and wellness days

Everyone and Anyone


Following us on social media, fundraising or making a donation are great ways to support us and mean we can continue to deliver essential programmes


You can even hire our training rooms for your meeting!



To discuss any of our programmes, or to arrange a visit to our gardens in Battersea Park, or if you are interested in other ways to get involved, please contact the Thrive office on **020 7720 2212** or email **battersea@thrive.org.uk**

To find out more about our work and the people we support please go to

 www.thrive.org.uk

 or call us on **0118 988 5688**



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Thrive, The Society for Horticultural Therapy.
Registered Office: The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading, RG7 2AT.
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Registered company (no. 1415700).

Thrive - gardening for health charity

- Thrive use an approach called [social and therapeutic horticulture \(STH\)](#), where our team of trained horticultural therapists work with plants and people to improve an individual's physical and psychological health, communication and thinking skills.
- <https://www.thrive.org.uk/how-we-help/regional-centres-and-programmes/london>





gardening for hearts & minds

Gardening activities to support rehabilitation and recovery for people affected by heart disease and stroke

Free booklet on thrive website for gardening exercises for post stroke and heart conditions:

https://www.thrive.org.uk/files/images/Shop/Gardening_for_Hearts_and_Minds.pdf

a guide of **gardening activities** to support **your rehabilitation, recovery, health and wellbeing**

this **guide** has been **put together** with the **help** of **people affected by heart disease and stroke**, and **professionals**

you **can garden** using **just one pot**

you **can start** the **activities** at **any time**

- **gardening is good** for **you** and it's **fun!**

So **have a go**, because **gardening** really can **help** your long-term health.

Top gardening tips

- Stretch Before Gardening
- Planning Ahead Is The Trick To Smart Gardening
- Gardeners should Bend From The Hips
- Pace Yourself In The Garden
- Use equipment to improve kneeling
- Have phone on you to call for help if you get into difficulty
- If no garden – grow herbs indoors, have indoor plants and colourful flowers indoors



Top Tips For Staying Safe In The Garden

- Use gardening gloves to keep hands from being cut or dried out from soil.
- Use quality tools that you find comfortable and keep them clean and sharp. Use a wheelbarrow or trolley to move anything heavy around the garden (or ask someone to help you).
- Have a small kit bag with all the gardening tools you need for that day.
- Remember the effect your medication may have on your ability to garden.
 - Spasticity meds
 - Parkinson's meds - Think about times you're 'on' – and don't forget to take your tablets while absorbed in gardening.
 - Try taking a pill timer or reminder alarm to help you stay on track.
- Find a well-balanced watering can. I know this sounds a little strange, but it can be difficult to water with a cheaper version.
- If physically something has changed meaning you are less able to maintain your garden, then look for alternatives.