

Get a Better Grip on Your Tools

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When heading out to dig, hoe, or rake, most gardeners look for the tool that will do the job most effectively. Judging from the growing number of gardeners who suffer from repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow (as well as back and knee injuries), there's a need for more awareness on how to select garden tools.

The science of ergonomics, in which tasks and tools are designed or modified to "fit" the human body and not the reverse, is helping to bring more "body-friendly" tools to gardeners. Most of these tools are no more expensive than standard tools, so their prices need not deter their purchase.

In some cases, gaining the body advantage of ergonomic tools doesn't necessarily require the purchase of new tools. Many long-handled tools can be made to function more ergonomically by placing rubber, foam, plastic padding or bicycle grips on the handles to make the handles softer, larger, and more slip-resistant. Attaching D- and T-handles onto straight tool shafts will also help to keep wrists in a neutral position. Converting short-handled tools into long-handled tools by adding extension handles allows for standing up, another important ergonomic consideration.

For Sources of D- and T-shaped handles:

A.S.I

S.E. 9th Street

Pompano Beach, FL 33060

NO CATALOG

A.M. Leonard

P. O. Box 816

Piqua, OH 45356

FREE CATALOG

One to Grow On

P. O. Box 5372

Virginia Beach, VA 23471

FREE CATALOG

For additional information contact your local Outreach and Extension Service or the University of Missouri-Columbia, 1.800.995.8503.

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