

## DIY – Don't Injure Yourself

We are a nation of DIY'ers; every weekend and bank holiday, hundreds of thousands of people are in a rush to get to grips with their latest home improvement project. Inevitably, there will be DIY disasters; injuries that could have been avoided. According to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), 3,900 people are treated in hospital every week as a result of DIY related injuries.

The British Chiropractic Association has identified the top three home improvement tasks, which can cause back pain or other problems.

- **painting and decorating** – including painting those awkward areas such as ceilings, and papering the walls
- **pruning and patios** – the 'room outside' has a lot to answer for with laying patios and digging among the worst offenders
- **moving and lifting** – lifting heavy items, shifting furniture and twisting on ladders

The British Chiropractic Association has some good advice for DIY'ers:

### Reach for the sky

- If you are planning on painting a ceiling, think about getting the largest amount of paint on in the shortest space of time.
- Use a paint pad or roller with an extended handle and hold it at chest height.
- Keep your head as neutral as possible and keep facing forward so you don't over exert your neck.
- If you can lie down – do!

### Don't twist again

- If you have to use a ladder, make sure you are always facing it and move the ladder regularly rather than lean to reach out.
- Always keep your shoulders, hips and knees pointing in the same direction

### Don't start with heavy-duty gardening

- Start with the lighter jobs like mowing the lawn and then move on.
- If you are pruning, use long handled secateurs and get as close to the plants as you can.
- If laying a patio keep the slab close to your body and bend your knees. It is sometimes better to bend one knee rather two, as your supporting leg gives you a position of strength.

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### Treat DIY like normal exercise

- Warm up and warm down to lessen the chance of muscle strains.

### Dress appropriately

- Don't wear tight constricting clothes.

### Take a break

- Vary your activity, spend no more than 20-30 minutes on any one thing and take regular breaks.

### Plan ahead

- If you are planning a trip to the local DIY store and buying heavy items like cement, buy smaller bags rather than one big bag. Smaller items are easier and safer to carry.
- If you do buy heavy items, ask someone else to help carry it to and into your car. When you get home, dry material such as sand, gravel, compost or cement can be shovelled out and into smaller containers.

## **REMEMBER, PAIN IS A WARNING SIGN – DO NOT IGNORE IT**

*Chiropractors treat problems with your joints, bones and muscles, and the effects they have on your nervous system. Working on all the joints of your body, concentrating particularly on the spine, they use their hands to make gentle, specific adjustments (the chiropractic word for manipulation) to improve the efficiency of your nervous system and release your body's natural healing ability. Chiropractic does not involve the use of any drugs or surgery.*

### **For more information or to find a BCA chiropractor in your local area:**

The British Chiropractic Association  
Blagrove House  
17 Blagrove Street  
Reading  
Berkshire RG1 1QB  
Tel: 0118 950 5950  
E-mail: [enquiries@chiropractic-uk.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@chiropractic-uk.co.uk)  
Website: [www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk](http://www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk)

*Members of the British Chiropractic Association (BCA) abide by a strict code of ethics and the association only accepts members who have graduated from an internationally recognised college of chiropractic education after a minimum of four years full-time training. The BCA ensures its chiropractors maintain high standards of conduct, practice, education and training. Like medical practitioners and dentists, all chiropractors are registered by law.*

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