

Spring Cleaning Tips



Get out your mops and dusters! A good clean can do wonders to freshen up the environment and liven your mood and spirits. It's also good exercise! Be careful though, this extra elbow grease may come with painful consequences. Here are some tips to avoid injury.

- 1) Think of the Basics:** It is important for the whole body, including the joints and connective tissue, to stay hydrated, so drink water frequently while doing housework. Set attainable goals. Don't rush through a full day of housework or you may neglect to pay attention to proper body mechanics. Listen to your body. If something is painful, then stop—it's the body's way of communicating a problem. Remember that working through the pain is only going to augment any potential injury. Make sure to take rest breaks and ask for help if you need it.
- 2) Proper Lifting Technique:** Keep containers, boxes, and laundry baskets close to your body at your center of gravity. Bend at the knees and hips, not at the back, to avoid muscle or disc injury. Be sure to activate your core and use your leg muscles to lift.
- 3) Body Mechanics:**
 - When vacuuming: keep the vacuum handle at your side the whole time and walk to areas in corners instead of reaching out with your body to maintain a neutral spine position.
 - When mopping and sweeping: avoid stooping or leaning too far forward by moving your legs back and forth and work on small areas at a time.
 - When washing windows or painting: use a secure ladder or step stool to stay level with the area you are washing/painting rather than stretching, pulling, or twisting your back and neck. Over-reaching with your arm may seem quicker, but tends to cause more pain especially in the neck and shoulders.
- 4) Variety:** Try to avoid marathon cleaning. Instead of three hours of scrubbing on your hands and knees, try 30 minutes of an activity and then switch to another that will use different muscles and put your body in a different position.
- 5) Only use safe steps or ladders.** If you need to reach a high area, make sure you use a safe, dependable step-stool or ladder. Do not use a bar stool or dining room chair. These surfaces are not meant to be climbed on and could tip over easily. Make sure your step stool is placed evenly on the ground. If you use a step-stool to get higher, be sure you can get high enough and close enough so you don't have to lean and reach too far.

