Below are some easy stretches to help you prepare to garden or to stretch out after you garden. Remember, you should never feel any pain, only a gentle stretch. Other things to keep in mind as you garden:

- Avoid prolonged repetitive motions – rotate tasks every 15 minutes.
- Check posture – aim to keep back flat, not hunched over. Think Goddess Pose.
- Consider a counter motion.
- Lift with legs, not back.

All of the following stretches can be done sitting in a chair with feet on the earth for stability. Do each stretch three to five times.

**ARM RAISES**
- With an extended spine, place your hands at your side, palms facing out
- Inhale and slowly raise your hands while reaching out through finger tips.
- Touch hands together above head, turn hands outward, reach out and slowly push down hands down while exhaling.

**SHOULDER RAISES**
- With spine extended, pull shoulders forward
- Lift them up toward your ears
- Push them back and down.

**HEAD ROLL**
- Sitting up straight, tilt your head toward one shoulder
- Slowly roll chin to chest and to the opposite shoulder.
- Raise head, repeat in other direction.
- Do NOT bend the head backward.

**THE FINGERS**

**FINGER & WRIST STRETCHES**
- With an extended spine, fold hands like you’re praying with fingers interlocked.
- Twist your hands so palms are facing away from you.
- Slowly push your hands away from you as far as comfortable and hold for a few breaths and release.
- Reverse fingers so other thumb is on the outside in prayer position and repeat.

**THUMB TO FINGERS**
- With arms at side, bent at elbows with palms facing forward
- Stretch fingers out, and then slowly touch each fingertip to your thumb.

**THUMB TUCK**
- With arm at side, bend at the elbow with palm facing forward
- Tuck your thumb into the palm of your hand and wrap your four fingers around it. You shouldn’t see your first knuckle.
• Rotate your hand in a circle, feeling the stretch in the wrist and forearm on the down side of the circle.
• Repeat on other side.

FINGER FLICKING
• Place elbows on knees with hands hanging down.
• Flick your fingers like you’re trying to get something off of them.

SIDE BENDS & NECK TRACTION
• With your left hand next to you gripping the chair seat and your right arm at your side, palm facing out,
• Slowly lift the right arm up and to the left, as you bend your left arm until you feel a soft stretch along the side and arm.
• To add the neck traction: remain bent over and move right arm down slowly until you feel a soft stretch in the neck.
• Repeat on other side.

SPINAL TWIST
• Sit up straight – spine lengthened – NEVER twist on a compressed spine
• Place left hand behind you
• Place right hand on left hip
• Inhale and slowly twist to the left as you exhale: abdomen, shoulders, neck, head
• Exhale as you slowly untwist.
• Repeat on other side.

FEET AND ANKLES
• With legs out in front of you
• Point toes and hold
• Flex fee and pull toes back toward you
• Rotate feet in circles to the left and then the right.

SEATED FORWARD BEND
• Sitting up straight, inhale and raise arms overhead, palms forward
• Exhale, slowly stretching arms out and down until you feel a nice stretch

SEATED BACK BEND
• Sit up straight on edge of chair, feet on the earth with toes turned lightly inward.
• Hold on to chair seat.
• While inhaling, lift up chest and bend back slightly so upper spine arches.
• Let shoulders release down away from ears.
• DO NOT tilt head backward.
• Slowly exhale and return upright.

GODDESS POSE – This is an alternative to weeding on your knees.
• From a standing position with feet about 3’ apart, and turned out about 45 degrees.
• Bend knees over toes while squatting down.
• Rest forearm on thigh for stability.
• Keep back flat.

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