

# West Lake Hills ECHO

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## Back Pain: How To Get The Fall Gardening Done Without Making Your Back Pain Worse

Has this ever happened to you? You're going about your day doing your usual day-to-day activities, you could be doing something as simple as taking the trash out, weeding the front garden, folding up your laundry or even changing the bed when all of a sudden you feel a sharp pain in your back and you can hardly move. Sound familiar?

Just a few weeks ago this happened to one of our patients Kim, 52, from Rollingwood. She was making the most of a quiet and cooler than normal September weekend, and before she planned to relax for the day she decided to do some gardening.

Kim was fine to begin with, but as soon as she went to make the bed the next morning, her back went out completely. At first the pain wasn't so bad, but then a few hours later her back began to stiffen up.

Like most people we see at CORE, she first thought "it's just a stuff back, I probably got a bit carried away with pulling weeds, it's happened before." But the next day the pain was still there, and it felt even worse! Kim's back started to ache when she sat down, she struggled to find a comfortable position to fall asleep in. She couldn't even bring herself to stand without being in agony AND she had a weekend away in Colorado planned.

How was she going to get away to the mountains with so much back pain?

Now you might be thinking this won't happen to you, not with something as basic as gardening or everyday chores. When you consider that most of us do chores around the house or in the yard, that's a lot of backs that could potentially become stiff and painful!

The thing is, many people will 'put up' with a bad back for days (even weeks, months!), hoping the pain will go away on it's own eventually. However, you really don't have to play the waiting game and suffer for so long – especially not if it's getting in the way of daily life and even vacations that you've had booked for months!

So how about I give you three quick tips for everyday chores to help make agonizing back pain a thing of the past – because the activities themselves aren't to blame (even though we'd like to think they are), it's how you 'do' them with poor mechanics and posture.

First, when raking, using a vacuum cleaner or a broom: one of the most common mistakes people make is reaching out with their arms while bending at the waist over and over again. This bending repeatedly in awkward positions can place a lot of strain on your muscles – especially in your back! To help fix this the key is to keep your hips and shoulders moving towards the work.

What I mean by this is instead of leaning forwards and twisting your back, step forward in the direction of the movement with one foot and bend slightly at the knee, allowing your upper body to stay upright to reduce any strain in the back.

Second, when pulling weeds, doing the laundry or rescuing that lost sock from the bedroom floor, leaning over can really trigger back pain – similar to raking and using the vacuum, bending at the waist repeatedly will strain your back muscles. To get around this I tell my patients to do something I like to call the 'golfer's reach', it has this name because it's similar to how golfers pick up a ball.

When you reach for items with your right hand balance yourself by lifting your left leg up in the air behind you. If you need extra support, place your opposite hand on a nearby surface. If you're reaching with your left hand, reverse the directions. The deeper you reach with your hand, the higher your opposite leg should go so that you can keep your balance while simultaneously reducing the amount of strain on your back muscles.

One more thing, I know it can be easy to get caught up, rushing around the house to get everything done but one thing to remember is to be kind to yourself and take 20 minute breaks throughout. Relax with a big glass of water before returning to your chores. If you start feeling any signs of pain with the yard-work or chores, stop the activity, stretch and think about the position you were in or how you were moving when you started to have pain.

Don't allow yourself to get so busy checking chore off of your to-do list that you forget the safe way to move your body. Start using these tips and you'll be keeping your back safe.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

# IMPORTANT NUMBERS

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY .....	911
Fire.....	911
Ambulance .....	911
Police Department .....	512-327-1195
Sheriff – Non-Emergency.....	512-974-0845
Fire Department Administration .....	512-539-3400
Travis County Animal Control .....	512-972-6060

## SCHOOLS

Eanes ISD .....	512-732-9000
Westlake High School.....	512-732-9280
Ninth Grade Center .....	512-732-9260
West Ridge Middle School .....	512-732-9240
Hill Country Middle School .....	512-732-9220
Valley View Elementary.....	512-732-9140
Forest Trail Elementary.....	512-732-9160
Eanes Elementary.....	512-732-9100
Cedar Creek Elementary .....	512-732-9120
Bridge Point Elementary .....	512-732-9200
Barton Creek Elementary.....	512-732-9100

## UTILITIES

Water District 10 .....	512-327-2230
Wastewater	
Crossroads Utility Service 24 Hour Number....	512-246-1400
New Accounts .....	512-402-1990
Austin Energy .....	512-322-9100
Texas Gas Service	
Custom Service.....	1-800-700-2443
Emergencies.....	512-370-8609
Call Before You Dig.....	512-472-2822
AT&T	
New Service.....	1-800-464-7928
Repair.....	1-800-246-8464
Billing.....	1-800-858-7928
Time Warner Cable	
Customer Service.....	512-485-5555
Repairs.....	512-485-5080
Austin/Travis County Hazardous Waste .....	512-974-4343

## OTHER NUMBERS

City Administration .....	512-327-3628
Municipal Court .....	512-327-1863
Property Tax .....	512-854-9473
Appraisal District .....	512-834-9317
Chamber of Commerce.....	512-306-0023
City of West Lake Hills .....	www.westlakehills.org

## NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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Editor.....	westlakehills@peelinc.com
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(Continued from Cover)

For more information on easing back pain like this, go to my website to get your free copy of my special report titled “8 Essential Tips To Ease Back Pain... Without Pain Meds Or Injections... For The Active Parent”. Go to <https://therapyandpilates.com/back-pain/> or call 512-215-4227 to learn more.

Stephen Dunn is a Holistic Physical Therapist and is the co-owner of CORE Therapy & Pilates with his wife, Cheryl Dunn. They have been open for business and helping people with back pain from West Lake Hills since 2005.

## FREE EDUCATIONAL CAREGIVER SERIES PROVIDED BY ALZHEIMER'S TEXAS

During the months of November and December, Alzheimer's Texas will be holding free seminars for individuals who need guidance to take care of someone suffering from Alzheimer's or related dementia.

Lead by Steve Catoe, Certified PAC Trainer and Certified Validation Worker, these seminars provide complementary caregiver education on topics particular to caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. All sessions will be held at the Alzheimer's Texas office, 3520 Executive Center Drive, Suite 140, Austin, TX, 78731. Following are the dates and topics of each session:

### Tuesday, Nov 14th 6:00 – 7:15pm Part I

#### *Introduction to Alzheimer's: ALZ 101*

What is Alzheimer's, Diagnosis and treatments, Stages, How to cope

### Tuesday, November 21st 2:00 – 4:00pm Part II

#### *Behaviors and Communication*

Preserving Dignity and Sexuality, Agitation, Combativeness, Hallucinations, Communication Techniques

### Tuesday, November 28th 2:00 – 4:00pm Part III

#### *Activities of Daily Living*

Bathing, Eating, Dressing, Toileting, Hydration and Nutrition, Safety, Driving, Activities

### Tuesday, December 5th 2:00 – 4:00pm Part IV

#### *Care for the Caregiver*

Getting support, Adjustment and Grief, Caregiving Issues, Communicating with Family and Physicians

Registration is required due to limited class size. Please call (512) 241-0420 or email Victoria, [vcardenas@txalz.org](mailto:vcardenas@txalz.org) if you would like to attend.

## ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S TEXAS

Alzheimer's Texas is dedicated to eliminating Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research and to enhancing care and support for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, their families, and caregivers. The organization provides care consultations, 24-hour help line, support groups, respite care, educational and social engagement programs, and professional training. Alzheimer's Texas was founded in 1982 and serves Central Texas. For more information, visit [www.txalz.org](http://www.txalz.org).





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## Light Up the Holidays with a Day Trip to Johnson City

The twinkliest town in the Hill Country is a perfect destination for a holiday tour of lights with family and friends. Located in the heart of the Hill Country, Johnson City has activities for all ages to enjoy.

During the day, light up your imagination with a visit to the Science Mill, a science museum housed in Johnson City's historic 1880s mill. Run your hands through the 3D topographic sandbox to create colorful rivers, mountains, lakes and dams. Enter the Fractarium to experience a larger-than-life lighted representation of Romesco broccoli and see how fractals are a marvel of nature. Explore the Silo of McKays, a multidimensional art installation combining art and science with light, sound, rhythm, balance, color and harmony. The Science Mill's 40+ hands-on exhibits (and current 3D movie, Wonders of the Arctic) will engage all ages.

The Science Mill is located at 101 S. Lady Bird Lane in Johnson City, TX and will be open extended hours during the holidays. Find more information at [www.sciencemill.org](http://www.sciencemill.org).

Johnson City's annual Lights Spectacular celebration, celebrating its 28th year, runs Friday, Nov. 24 through New Year's Day, starting with the spectacular courthouse lighting ceremony and fireworks.

The whole town glows, from the Blanco County Courthouse to the dazzling display of light-wrapped trees at Pedernales Electric Cooperative's headquarters, to candlelight tours of Lyndon Baines Johnson's boyhood home. Visitors can enjoy the lighting extravaganza by foot or by horse-drawn carriage, and local retailers and art galleries offer extended hours, food and music on the town square during the Spectacular. The event is free and pet friendly.

For more information about Johnson City and the Lights Spectacular visit the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce website at [www.johnsoncitytexas.info](http://www.johnsoncitytexas.info).

## TriDelta Alumnae of Austin

Please join the TriDelta Alumnae of Austin at our second annual Cookies & Castles event which benefits Dell Children's Blood and Cancer Center. The fundraiser will be held at St. Luke United Methodist Church in Clarksville on Friday, December 8 and Saturday, December 9.

We will provide unlimited icing and candy to decorate gingerbread men (cookies) and gingerbread houses (castles) and we'll clean up the mess! Ladies Night Out will be Friday, December 8 from 7-9pm, sans kiddos. Family Decorating will be Saturday, December 9 and starting times at 9:30am, 11:30am, or 1:30pm.

Individual houses or tables of four houses will be available on our website: <http://www.austin.tridelta.org/cookies--castles>

Sponsorship opportunities, volunteer opportunities, and other questions can be directed to [cookiescastlesATX@gmail.com](mailto:cookiescastlesATX@gmail.com)

Friday, December 8 7-9pm

St. Luke United Methodist Church

Saturday, December 9 9:30am, 11:30am, or 1:30pm

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## CENTIPEDES

Centipedes have a single pair of antennae on their head and a long, worm-like body. They have one pair of legs per body segment with the first pair of legs modified to function as claws and are used to capture prey. These claws are sometimes called fangs since they are connected to poison glands that can inject venom to subdue captured prey.

Most centipedes found in Texas are relatively small, but the red headed centipede, *Scolopendra heros*, can reach over nine inches when full grown. The bite of larger species of centipedes may cause extreme discomfort and pain.

Centipedes can live from one to six years. They prefer moist, protected habitats such as under stones, rotted logs, leaves or bark. Winter is spent as an adult and eggs are laid in soil during warm months and are covered by a sticky substance.

Centipedes are predaceous with many species feeding on other arthropods, such as insects. Their modified pair of legs, or claws, is directly under the head, allowing prey to be injected with venom.

Most centipedes can only bite with their poison claws located directly under the head resulting in a bee-like sting; however, *Scolopendra* can harm a person with the sharp claws of its many walking legs. Each walking leg is tipped with a sharp claw capable of making tiny cuts in human skin. A poison produced from the attachment point of each leg may be dropped into the wounds resulting in an inflamed and irritated condition. The best rule of thumb is to never handle large centipedes.

With cooler weather, centipedes may move inside homes to avoid extreme temperatures. Tips to prevent centipedes from sharing your home:

- move objects providing harborage away from the structure such as compost piles, firewood and stones
- create a band of gravel, or similar material between the foundation of the home and any landscape beds that touch the structure
- occasionally turn mulch near structures to allow it to dry out
- seal cracks, crevices, and pipe penetrations with sealant that will expand with our temperature extremes
- repair weather stripping around doors and windows as needed
- properly ventilate crawl spaces or areas under the home to allow for air flow through the area
- use perimeter sprays around a building's foundation

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)



## STRETCH YOURSELF IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.

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## Providing Habitat for the Monarch Butterfly

*Submitted by LaJuan Tucker, City of Austin and Johanna Arendt, Travis County*



Over the past few years, Texas has boasted some of the highest growth rates in the country. Central Texas has seen increased development, urbanization, and economic growth. Natural landscapes are quickly being converted to roadways, housing, and retail.

These dramatic shifts in the landscape are having a significant impact on wildlife. Water sources are being paved over or polluted with runoff. Agricultural lands and native grasslands that provide nesting and foraging sites for birds are increasingly replaced with houses and gas stations. Wildlife now must cross roadways and travel longer distances to find food, shelter, and mates.

There are, however, many ways that residents can help wildlife in urban and suburban landscapes. Balconies, parks, greenbelts, school yards, and backyards are just a few of the places that can provide important resources for wildlife.

One species that especially needs our help is the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). This iconic butterfly is most famous for its long migrations and its beautiful orange and black markings. Unfortunately, research shows that overall monarch numbers are on the decline. Here in Central Texas, we encounter the monarch butterfly during both its northern and southern migrations, which puts us in a unique position to assist with conservation efforts.

Learn more on November 8, when LaJuan Tucker will be giving a presentation about backyard wildlife at Concordia University. Join us at 6:30pm in Room C270 for a fun, informative program.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Provide monarch habitat essentials: food, water, shelter, and a place to raise their young in parks, yards and open spaces.

Provide native milkweed, the “host plant” for the monarch larvae:

Antelope horn (*Asclepias asperula*)

Green milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*)

Texas milkweed (*Asclepias texana*)

Find more at [https://www.wildflower.org/collections/collection.php?collection=centex\\_milkweed](https://www.wildflower.org/collections/collection.php?collection=centex_milkweed)

Plant native, butterfly-friendly flowers that provide nectar sources for adult butterflies: <http://xerces.org/monarch-nectar-plant-guide-southern-plains/>

Supervise pets and children when outdoors to ensure they do not harm wildlife visitors.

Control imported fire ant populations in your yard. Fire ants are predators of monarch eggs and caterpillars.

Use pesticides sparingly or avoid using them altogether. These harmful chemicals are thought to have a negative effect on both milkweed and the butterflies themselves.

### THE MONARCH'S LIFE CYCLE

The monarch butterfly's journey is well documented in NOVA's *Journey of the Butterflies*. This petite insect, weighing no more than 0.75 grams, starts off as a tiny egg on a milkweed plant. Milkweed is the monarch's “host” plant -- they lay eggs only on that type of plant. Once the eggs hatch, monarch caterpillars begin to eat the milkweed and sequester the cardenolides found there. Cardenolides are poisonous to most vertebrates, making the monarch repugnant to predators. The bright orange and black coloration the butterfly has after metamorphosis advertises to predators their poisonous nature.

While the adult monarch is brightly colored, the caterpillar blends in by taking on the colors of its host plant, with beautiful bands of green, yellow, white, and black. In this larval stage, monarchs molt several times as they grow. After its final growth phase, the caterpillar begins its preparation for pupation. Most monarchs will stay in pupation from 9 to 15 days, depending on ambient temperatures. Once the wing muscles have developed, the chrysalis turns clear, exposing the coloration for which the butterfly is famed.

After emerging from the chrysalis, the monarch fuses its proboscis, which it will use to suck nectar from flowers, and waits for its wings to dry. If the monarch is located in North America, it will soon begin a journey of around 3,000 miles to overwintering locations in California, Mexico and other southwestern states. How the monarch butterfly makes such a tremendous journey is still a mystery. Some believe that earth's magnetic fields assist the monarch in navigation. Others believe that the angle of the sun during different seasons gives them clues. Once they arrive at their overwintering grounds, the monarchs wait for the weather to warm up again before the next generation makes the journey back north.

Although a single generation will make the 3,000-mile flight south, the journey back northward is made by four successive generations. Central Texas is in the bottle neck of the monarch's flight path. Both northbound and southbound monarchs fly through Texas on their way in and out of Mexico. Because of our location in the monarch's flight path, local residents have a unique opportunity to help the monarch on their spectacular journey.

As the Central Texas population continues to grow, so can our responsibility to make sure urban and suburban places serve not only as economic growth centers, but also as havens for wildlife such as the monarch butterfly.

References: Oberhauser Karen S. and Michelle J Solensky ed.

*The Monarch Butterfly: Biology and Conservation*. New

York: Cornell University Press. 2004. Print

About the author: LaJuan Tucker is the Program Coordinator for the City of Austin's Wildlife Austin Program. This program advocates for the creation and conservation of public spaces as critical sources of wildlife habitat and opportunities to connect the community back to nature. LaJuan also administers the Mayor's Monarch Pledge for the City of Austin, is a Habitat Steward Host™ and a Landscape for Life Trainer™.



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