

Gardening with Limited Range of Motion

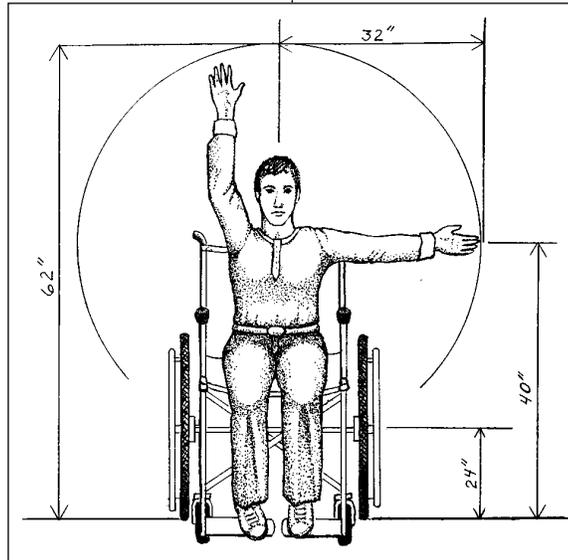
P. Rogers and J. Powell

Raising beds in therapeutic gardening for people with range of motion problems brings the garden to the gardener rather than the gardener to the garden. The garden can be modified to meet the needs of each individual gardener.

- The garden's location and accessibility are of major importance.

Can the gardener get to the area at any season and time with little effort? Does the surface support year-round foot or wheel traffic? Are the sunlight requirements of garden plants (at least 6 hours each day) and their need for protection from strong winds being considered?

- The area around the raised beds must offer easy and safe access. The surface must be level, firm, free of obstacles, and wide enough to turn a wheelchair.
- Raised bed construction is based on each gardener's individual needs. The width should not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ the reach of the gardener. The height should be such that it matches the gardener's bending ability.
- The material used to construct the raised beds can be anything that accomplishes the job and remains



durable and functional. Examples include 2 x 4's treated with copper, not creosote or penta, bricks, building blocks, railway ties (old enough not to retain creosote odor), concrete culvert sections turned on end, pots on a table or bench, carts with deep trays on top, a vertical system that will hold pots, etc. You are limited only

by your imagination.

- Does the gardener need to sit while gardening? Various methods can fill this need like a sitting board on top of a raised bed, benches, etc. Be sure these don't readily tip or break and are easy to move or rearrange.

Swing-down trellises can be used to bring the crop to the gardener. These are easy to construct from piping or other material and still remain reasonably lightweight. Stakes and containment devices should be easy to install and remove.

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MAKING GARDENING EASIER

- Avoid carrying water to the garden. Consider irrigation systems such as drip gardening systems that are easy to install and efficient in water placement. They should not block access to the garden or be hazardous. Plan ahead to avoid heavy labor requirements.
- Design easy methods for the gardener to bring in new plants, harvest and remove the crop, and remove old material from the site at season's end.

For more information about raised bed gardening, consult Extension publication FS 270, *Raised Bed Gardening*, available at no charge, or write the Oregon Master Gardener Program, OSU Extension Service, 211 S.E. 80th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97215.

For More Information

For further information on the Master Gardener Horticultural Therapy Program, write the Oregon State University Extension Service, Oregon Master Gardener Program, 211 S.E. 80th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97215.

Other information sheets available in the "Making Gardening Easier" series are:

Foster, S., Duvall, C., and Powell, J., *Adaptive Gardening Techniques for the Visually Impaired*. Oregon State University Extension Service publication EM 8498, (Corvallis, 1992).

Jewell, M., and Powell, J., *Gardening Hints for People with Arthritis*, Oregon State University Extension Service publication EM 8499 (Corvallis, 1992).

Throckmorton, E., and Powell, J., *Gardening Adaptations for People with Gripping and Lifting Problems*, Oregon State University Extension Service publication EM 8500 (Corvallis, 1992).

Foster, S., and Powell, J., *Gardening Strategies for People with Heart and Lung Problems*, Oregon State University Extension Service publication EM 8501 (Corvallis, 1992).

Foster, S., and Powell, J., *Gardening Ideas for Children with Special Needs*, Oregon State University Extension Service publication EM 8502 (Corvallis, 1992).

McNeilan, R.A., and Powell, J., *Therapeutic Benefits of Gardening*, Oregon State University Extension Service publication EM 8503 (Corvallis, 1992).

Throckmorton, E., and Powell, J., *Adapting Garden Tools to Overcome Physical Challenges*, Oregon State University Extension Service publication EM 8504 (Corvallis, 1992).

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