

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Pain

Farmers are particularly at risk for pain. Working long hours, physically demanding and repetitive tasks, in all types of weather, all challenge a body. If you grew up farming, you may be at even greater risk, from having stressed your muscles and bones before they were fully developed.

Pain is not merely an indicator, it is a signal that the body is being misused or overtaxed. 'Working through' pain can mean more than an unpleasant day—pain may lead to injury, down time, and loss of productivity on the farm.

The good news is you can understand and manage your pain and its sources. Most pain can be reduced, avoided, or eliminated altogether by personal awareness and modest changes in farming practice. Improved pain management can yield improved production on the farm.

Call Maine AgrAbility for advice on adaptive tools and techniques to manage your pain now and for years to come.

Maine AgrAbility
extension.umaine.edu/agrability

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1.800.287.1478 or 207.944.1533

This material is based on work supported through a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), U.S. Department of Agriculture, under USDA NIFA grant number 2018-41590-28715.

What is AgrAbility?

AgrAbility provides assistance for farmers, farm workers and farm families with chronic health conditions or disabilities. Maine AgrAbility works with farmers across our state to help them farm successfully and independently. The program is administered by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension in partnership with Alpha One, and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Maine AgrAbility can help with any kind of physical, cognitive, or health-related condition. If you are currently experiencing health conditions or other barriers that make it difficult to farm, call us. These services are provided at no cost to farmers.

- **On-site assessments** to identify barriers to completing tasks in the agricultural workplace.
- **Recommendations** for tools to assist your work, changes in routines, and other solutions to keep you farming.
- **Connections** to peers, rehabilitation counselors, and health care providers.
- **Education** and training on safety and injury prevention.



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Managing Pain on the Farm: A Tool for Farmers



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Identify Your Pain

Green: All systems GO

- Full mobility and strength
- Usual range of motion
- Ability to do routine tasks
- Healthy mixture of emotions

Yellow: Proceed with CAUTION

- Reduced mobility
- Decreased range of motion
- Weakness or discomfort
- Need to alter routine tasks
- Emotional distress

Red: STOP now

- Pain with or without movement
- Very limited range of motion
- Persistent tingling or numbness
- Difficulty or inability to do routine tasks or chores
- Disinterest in self care
- Increased emotional distress
- Lack of sleep
- Cognitive changes
- Self-medicating (alcohol, drugs)

Manage Your Pain



● Continue routine activities

● Ask PCP about preventive health steps

● Warm-up, stretch, and avoid strenuous activity

● Call AgrAbility for advice on adaptive tools and techniques

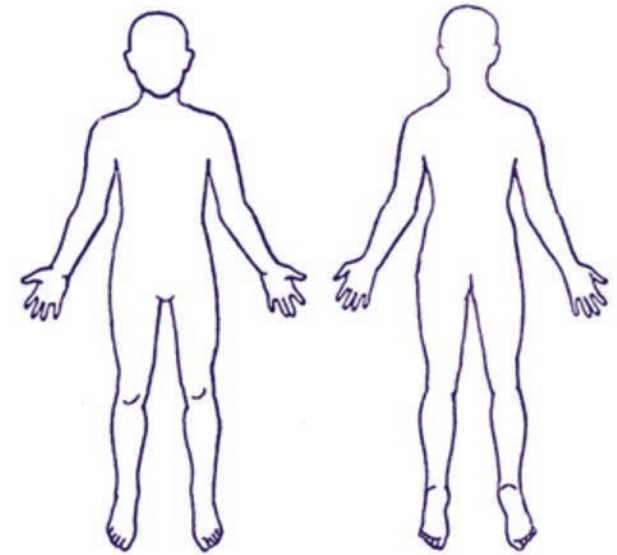
● Delegate or delay tasks

● See your PCP

Locate Your Pain

Pain: It's all in a day's work.

- Working with unpredictable livestock.
- Pushing, pulling, shoveling, lifting, and carrying
- Maintaining awkward positions.
- Putting up hay, shearing sheep, harvesting produce, moving machinery.
- Exposure to vibration from sitting for hours on a tractor.



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