As the temperature warms and the days grow longer, people are energized to clean their homes of winter must and dirt. But, spring cleaning can be very hard on muscles and the skeletal structure. In fact, the National Safety Council says an injury occurs every four seconds in the home. Many of these injuries could be avoided by following a simple rule – never twist, rotate or overextend your back, neck and shoulders. Keep yourself injury- and pain-free while doing spring cleaning by considering these tips:

**Spring Cleaning Tips**

**Vacuuming:** The twisting and turning movements most people use when vacuuming put increased compression on the spine and neck. To avoid problems, vacuum with the machine or hose close to the front-center part of your body and at waist height. Using both hands on the handle, push the vacuum in front of you while walking in a long line and then pull back using the same motion. Never push and pull the handle back and forth with short strokes.

**Vinyl and Tile Floors:** Mopping is recommended instead of scrubbing on your knees. Mop small segments in front of you, pushing forward, then backward without leaning forward. Then, step to the next section of floor without rotating or bending your spine. The key is to keep the mop in front of you while standing with your back straight.

**Windows:** Stretching upward to wash windows is inviting trouble, so be sure you are level with the area you are cleaning. Keep your feet on the ground (or ladder/step stool) and you’re back straight. Your head should be in a straightforward position, not tilted back or upward for a long period of time. To reduce your chances of falling, never climb on furniture or windowsills to clean windows. If you use a stool or ladder, it should be level, sturdy and free of cleaning materials that can spill or trip you.

**Bathtub:** Kneeling outside the tub and then bending and stretching forward is not recommended. Instead, stand outside the tub with your spine in a straight position and use a mop to clean tile walls and the tub. If you need to really scrub, climb in the tub and bend at the knees, never at the waist. Work in short spurts and take frequent breaks to avoid strain of scrubbing for long periods of time.

**Painting:** More force than you would expect is placed on the spine and neck when pushing a paintbrush or roller. The easiest way to paint is with a sprayer, but if you must use a brush or roller keep it in front of you and waist-high so that your spine is straight. Looking up at high walls or ceilings for extended periods of time can put extra pressure on nerves and cause pinching and numbness. Painting in short intervals and taking frequent breaks are recommended for any type of house painting.

You’ll never avoid a few achy muscles after you clean or spruce up your house, but following these simple tips can help make spring cleaning safe and void of mishaps.

Call your local NovaCare Rehabilitation center or visit **novacare.com** today to learn more healthy tips and tricks!

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618-439-3399 618-529-3201 618-997-9497 618-242-1100 618-937-6200