

## Tips for Lawn Care and Aeration

Healthy roots are critical to a healthy lawn and aerating is an effective way to ensure that a lawn's roots are getting enough oxygen and nutrients, allowing them to grow deep. Aerating is part of an overall lawn care program that includes deep watering and proper mowing. Experts disagree on how frequently to aerate, so check for these warning signs: worn-out areas where people frequently walk, slowly draining puddles form on the lawn, quick water run-off after watering and the lawn has unusual dry patches.

### Aeration Basics

Aeration involves punching small holes all over the lawn to ensure the roots of the grass can not only breathe, it improves compaction and reduces thatch, according to “Lawn Care for Dummies” by Lance Walheim and the editors of The National Gardening Association. There are a number of ways to aerate, including with a gas-powered machine called a core aerator that pulls out small plugs of grass and soil or with a manual aerator which is a handheld implement that looks like a giant fork. Wearing golf shoes while walking across the lawn works as well.

Aerate the lawn during the grass's peak growth period, which translates to spring for warm-season grasses and either late summer or early fall for cool-season grasses.

### Watering and Aeration

Throughout the season, water the lawn twice a week, ensuring the lawn receives a half inch of water each time. For a healthy lawn, water must reach the roots and aerating improves water penetration, according to Jerry Baker in “Jerry Baker's Green Grass Magic.” Aerate the lawn in the morning and after watering because the soil will be easier to penetrate.

### Mowing and Aeration

After aerating, do not rake up the plugs left behind, recommends “Tauton's Lawn Guide” by John Fech. After a couple of days, and after the plugs have dried out, mow them slowly to chop them up and distribute them throughout the lawn. The microorganisms contained within the plugs will slowly make their way into the lawns and act as a layer of compost.

“Lawn Care for Dummies”; Lance Walheim and the Editors of The National Gardening Association; 1998

“Jerry Baker's Green Grass Magic”; Jerry Baker; 2001

“Taunton's Lawn Guide”; John Fech; 2002