

Turf maintenance top tips: seven things for volunteers to have in mind this season

#GroundsWeek 2021 takes place 1-7 March

This #GroundsWeek, the Grounds Management Association's specialist turf care advisers share their seven top tips for grassroots grounds volunteers and staff on how to maintain good quality pitches for the current season. From prioritising tasks, starting with the basics, or doing very little – below are recommendations for most sectors and sports.

Keep it clean!

- After using your machinery, take time to clean off any debris, such as grass clippings. If you can, use air rather than water to keep your machines running for longer. This can be done with mechanical blowers or compressors
- Coat your moving blades with turf safe lubricant. This will help keep them rust-free and ensure they are ready for the next usage. Keeping metal clean and lubricated will prolong its lifespan drastically

Look after your equipment and it will look after you

- Make sure you investigate unusual noises coming from machinery immediately
- By rectifying problems quickly you'll save money in the long run, compared to allowing minor problems to develop into expensive large repairs or replacements

Watering – timing is key

- When watering sports surfaces, try to avoid the heat of the day. Early morning and late evenings are the best times to avoid evaporation. During seasons with high rainfall, let nature take its course and monitor downpours when possible
- Make sure to avoid windy conditions as water will also evaporate quicker when windy

Don't fight the weather. It will always win

- Flexibility is key, so try to work with the weather rather than beat it
- Be patient. Sometimes holding off can make all the difference to the quality of your grounds. E.g., waiting a few days to spread fertiliser when rain is forecast will save you time and resources

Keep records and keep organised

- Make sure you have – at the very least – basic records or notes on what you've actioned and the results. These could be processes, timings, or quantities which is also useful if you work with multiple volunteers or staff so that tasks aren't completed twice
- By keeping records, you'll have a comparison or plan for next time. If you make mistakes, you can learn from them and note down what you'd do differently next time
- By keeping organised you can prioritise tasks and ensure critical work is done first

Get to know your peers, and don't be afraid to ask for help

- Reach out and get to know your local colleagues from all sports or facilities. Grounds management is a community
- It's worthwhile following the Grounds Management Association on [social media](#) for updates or why not [become a member](#)? You can also join national forums like the [Football Foundation's groundskeeping community](#), [The Hive](#), or the [RFL's Rugby Grounds Connected](#)

- By working together as a community, it allows you to ask for help if you're struggling
- There are a number of online resources including online training for volunteers on the [GMA website from just £25](#)

Bonus Tip

- To access loads a helpful videos and resources head over to the GMA's ['Grounds Management Toolkit'](#)