Barry Gallant: Why He Tells Younger Tradesmen to Take Care of Their Bodies Before They Have To

Barry Gallant, who built a career in paving, landscaping, concrete work, and masonry around Manchester, New Hampshire, says the lesson he wishes he had learned sooner is simple: protect your body before the job forces you to.

Manchester, New Hampshire Nov 26, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - Barry Gallant went straight into physical labor out of high school. Over the years that followed, he worked paving crews, did landscaping, poured concrete, and worked as a mason, the kind of jobs where the work is the exercise and there is no separating the two.

That kind of career is not measured by any one job. It is measured by how many years a person's body holds up under it.

"When you're young, you don't think about what the work is doing to you," Gallant says. "You just do the job. It's later, after years of it, that you start paying attention to what it actually costs."

The Lesson He Wishes He Heard Earlier

Gallant says nobody told him, when he started, that the physical toll of the work adds up slowly and quietly. A sore shoulder here, a stiff back there, nothing that stops you on any given day, until years of it are stacked on top of each other.

"If someone had told me early on to stretch, to move on my days off instead of just resting, I probably would have listened less than I should have," he says. "You think you're built for it. For a while, you are."

The advice he gives now is not complicated. Move on your own time, not just on the job's time. Treat your body like it has to last decades, because in this line of work, it does.

Small Habits That Add up Over Time

Gallant goes to the gym daily, or as close to daily as he can manage. He walks the local parks when the weather allows, and hikes when he gets the chance. None of it is dramatic. It is the kind of routine that only shows its value after years of keeping it up.

"It's not about one big thing you do," he says. "It's doing something small, consistently, so your body isn't only ever asked to work and never asked to just move."

He has also started taking weekly dance classes, something he picked up later in life rather than something he grew up doing. He says it works a different kind of balance and coordination than physical labor does, which he thinks matters as much as strength does for someone who has spent decades doing manual work.

Why Staying Active Off the Job Matters as Much as on It

A lot of physical labor is repetitive in one direction: lifting, bending, carrying the same way, over and over. Gallant says the body needs movement that goes the other way too, to balance out what the job wears down.

"The work will use your body one way, every day, for years," he says. "If that's the only movement you get, something eventually gives. I'd rather move on purpose, in a different way, than wait until the job's way is the only way I know."

He also points to time outdoors, away from any job site, as part of the same idea. Feeding wildlife, taking walks, getting to the ocean when he can. None of it is strenuous, but he says it keeps him from treating his body only as a tool for labor.

Advice for Anyone Starting Physical Work Today

Gallant's advice to anyone starting out in paving, landscaping, concrete work, or similar trades is not to wait for an injury to start paying attention to their body.

"Don't wait until something hurts to start taking care of yourself," he says. "By then you're not preventing anything, you're already behind. Build the habit early, even if you don't think you need it yet."

He says the habit matters more than the specific activity. A gym routine, regular walks, anything that keeps a person moving outside of work hours, builds toward the same thing: a body that can keep doing the work for longer.

To read more, visit the website here.

About Barry Gallant

Barry Gallant has spent his working life in and around Manchester, New Hampshire, doing paving, landscaping, concrete work, and masonry, and has also worked in warehouse labor. He goes to the gym daily, walks local parks and hikes when weather allows, and recently started taking weekly dance classes.

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