



NOVEMBER Newsletter

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When the snow starts flying, the back starts aching.

Although many people enjoy the winter months for the skiing, sledding, sleigh rides, and hot chocolate, not many of us enjoy shoveling the snow that falls onto our sidewalks and driveways. Thank goodness for the invention of the snow blower! But for those of us that do not have one of those handy devices, or choose not to haul it out when there are only a few inches of snow, the opportunity for injury while clearing the snow away is great.

There are many strategies that can help decrease your chances of injury while shoveling snow.

- Avoid having caffeine or nicotine before shoveling. These are stimulants that can cause your blood vessels to constrict, putting more strain on your heart and delivering less blood to your muscles.
- Although it may sound very obvious, dress in layers. Don't go outside in a T-shirt because you know that once you start shoveling your body will heat up. Dress warmly and take off layers as needed.
- Wear a scarf over your nose and mouth to avoid breathing cold air, and wear a hat to retain body heat.
- As with any workout, you must do a warm up first! The freezing temperatures outside can wreak havoc on joints and muscles, making them painful and sore. Although you may feel silly marching in place or doing jumping jacks in your front yard while it's 10 degrees outside, your body will thank you. Warm muscles work more efficiently and are less prone to injury.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is always an issue, whether it is 10 degrees or 100 degrees outside.



Now that you know what to do to get ready to shovel snow, here are some tips to follow while getting the job done!

- Choose a shovel that is the right size for you. A smaller shovel may take more scoops, but a lighter load will be easier to lift and put less stress on your body.
- Distance your hands on the handle of the shovel. This will give you more leverage.
- Try to push the snow straight ahead rather than lifting and throwing it.



- If lifting the snow, turn and step in the direction you are throwing. Avoid sudden turning and twisting motions, as this puts more pressure on the intervertebral discs in your spine.
- Walk to the place you are depositing snow rather than throwing it.
- Lift properly, bending your knees and lifting with your legs rather than your back. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart for balance and tighten your core as your lift to take stress off of your spine. Never bend at the waist! Try to keep your back as straight as possible!
- Take frequent breaks to take the strain off your muscles. A fatigued body asks for injury!
- Stop if you feel pain. You know your body best—listen to it!
- If you begin having chest pain or tightness, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing you should stop shoveling. You may need immediate professional help.



Who needs to think twice about snow shoveling?

Although shoveling snow is a fantastic aerobic workout, there are some that are at increased risk of heart attack due to the increased stress put on the heart.

- Anyone who has already had a heart attack.
- Persons with a history of heart disease.
- Those with high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- Those who smoke.
- Those who lead a sedentary lifestyle.

Anyone who meets the criteria above should check with their doctor before taking on the job of shoveling snow.

Back Aching?

If you experience any soreness or pain after shoveling snow, apply ice to the area for 20 minutes and repeat every hour 2-3 times per day over the next few days. See your Chiropractor if the pain persists, is sharp, shooting, or burning, or if you have tingling or numbness, as these could be signs of serious spinal injury.

Source: North Dakota State University. The Scoop on Snow Shoveling Safety. Jocey Mathern, Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., L.R.D., Food and Nutrition Specialist. November, 1999. American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Tips to Prevent Snow Shoveling and Snow Blowing Injuries. <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00060>.

HALLOWEEN SAFE AND FUN THIS YEAR

Thank you to everyone who participated to help ensure this year's Halloween was safe and fun for the local kids. Besides finding a few nickels and the high dosages of sugar, we were lucky enough to not find anything harmful to consume in the candy we x-rayed.

We would especially like to thank the local school districts' help distributing safety information and flyers. We look forward to doing this next year!



THANK YOU, PATIENTS!

The greatest compliment our patients give is the referral of their loved ones. We appreciate that you trust us enough to recommend a loved one into our care. Your continued thoughts are much appreciated.