



# Snow Shoveling Tips

While in the midst of these cold winter months, some of us will have the misfortune of having to put on our hats, boots, and gloves and take to our sidewalks and driveways for a little snow shoveling. These "tips" will make the task as enjoyable and pain-free as possible.

- \* First, if you are inactive, overweight, or have a history of heart trouble, talk to your doctor before shoveling. Shoveling snow puts strain on your heart, increases heart rate, blood pressure, and risk for injury.
- \* If possible, wait until the afternoon to shovel. The increased fluid pressure in the discs of your back in the morning increases your risk for back injury.
- \* Bend at your knees, and not your back. Keep your feet apart, the shovel close to your body, and lift with your leg muscles.
- \* If the snow is not too deep, push it with the shovel and give your back a break, figuratively speaking, of course!! If the snow is deep, lift small loads, and not heavy shovelfuls.
- \* Spray your shovel with non-stick cooking spray so the snow does not stick to your shovel.
- \* Avoid twisting your back and "throwing" the snow. Walk to your destination and dump the snow.
- \* Take frequent breaks. Stand up straight and walk around. Standing trunk extension exercises can help to reverse the effects of forward bending. Do those by standing up straight, placing your hands on your hips and bending backwards 10-20 times. Keep your knees straight.
- \* Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol. Alcohol can dull your sense of fatigue and cause you to overwork.
- \* Last, but not least, listen to your body. Stop shoveling if you feel tired or if you feel tightness in your chest. Ask for help and try to avoid the consequences of an injury. If all else fails, remember, Spring is right around the corner, and the snow will eventually melt!



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