

Safe Snow Shoveling Tips

Shoveling snow is a hard and potentially dangerous task. If you prepare properly and understand the safest ways to shovel then you will be able to prevent injury to your back and make shoveling a bit easier of a task.

It's also important to understand that shoveling is not for everyone. If you have a heart condition of any kind or have had a heart attack then you should not shovel. It is also recommended that people with low physical activity or those who rarely exercise abstain from shoveling. The stress shoveling can put on your heart is very real and the sudden stress on an inactive person's heart could cause a sudden and serious problem.

Prepare Properly

- Avoid caffeine and a heavy meal just before shoveling as both could add stress to your heart.
- Dress warm- wear cotton socks, insulated and waterproof boots and a warm hat that covers your ears. Also wear gloves that aren't too bulky so that you can get a good grip on the shovel.
- Bring a large water bottle with you outside which will help you remember to drink and make it more convenient as you won't have to go inside your home when you want to go get a drink.
- Make sure you stretch and go for a quick 1-2 minute walk to get your heart beat up. It will actually make the shoveling easier.

Snow Shoveling Tips

- Choose a plastic shovel over a metal shovel. Plastic shovels are lighter and will therefore be easier to use.
- Spray a silicone lubricant on the blade of the shovel. This will make the snow slide off and also prevent it from sticking.
- Do not throw snow over your shoulder; the safest way to shovel is to actually push the snow away from you.

- Shovel safely by bending legs slightly at the knee, letting thigh muscles do most of the pushing and lifting work; this will reduce strain on the heart and back.
- Use a shovel with a smaller blade. This will limit the weight of snow that you will be pushing and therefore limit your chances for injury.
- If you are at home during the start of a heavy snowfall, consider heading out to shovel after just a few inches. Going out a few times to shovel may be inconvenient and cold, but in the end it will be easier and quicker than shoveling many inches of heavy snow.
- The safest way to shovel to prevent injury is to always bend your knees slightly and gently lean over.
- IMMEDIATELY STOP SHOVELING IF YOU FEEL EVEN A LITTLE WEAK, OR DIZZY OR IF YOU CAN'T CATCH YOUR BREATH.

After Shoveling

- Make sure you re-hydrate yourself, especially if you did not drink enough fluids while you were out shoveling.
- Warm yourself up with a protein filled soup (like chicken noodle soup or a vegetable lentil soup). Not only will you get warmed up quickly but you will quickly feel your energy level return to normal.

Follow these snow shoveling tips for easy and safe shoveling. If snow shoveling is not for you or you just don't have the time or energy to tackle it, then consider hiring a snow removal service to do it.

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