

Injury Prevention Tips When Shoveling Snow



- Find a shovel that works for you. There are many ergonomic shovels available which can minimize bending and are lightweight.
- Wear layers and protective gloves and boots
- Perform a warm up and stretching exercises to loosen up muscles
 - Take a short walk
 - Perform stretching exercises such as arm circles, standing forward bend, standing side bend, and standing trunk rotation
- Always position yourself so that you are facing the area which you will be shoveling, as facing to the side would require you to twist or reach excessively
- Try to keep your back straight and upright by avoiding twisting and over extending your reach while shoveling in order to minimize stresses on your back
- Grip the shovel with your hands apart to distribute the weight and allow for better leverage
- Position one leg in front of the other and then reverse your foot position every so often so as to minimize additional strain to one side of the body
- Keep your knees slightly bent and move your legs and not your back when turning
- Alternate hand positions and the direction you push with the shovel every so often so as to minimize additional strain to one side of the body
- Hold the shovel evenly and close to your body as lifting the snow filled shovel out in front of you will put additional strain on the back
- Shovel smaller amounts of snow at a time to keep the load light
- Walk to the location which you would like to deposit the snow, rather than reaching or tossing it
- Take frequent 10-15 minute breaks