



Let it snow!

Stay safe while shoveling this season

When you consider that a shovelful of snow weighs 5 to 7 pounds, you realize how much weight you have to lift to clear your sidewalk or driveway — on average, several hundred pounds!

Shoveling snow can be a pain in more ways than one. These tips will help keep your back in top shape:

- **Don't let the snow pile up:** If the weather report calls for several days of snow, frequent shoveling will allow you to move smaller amounts of snow at once. It's far less strenuous in the long run.
- **Pick the right shovel:** Use a lightweight pusher-type shovel. If you are using a metal shovel, spray it with Teflon first, so snow won't stick to it.
- **Push, don't throw:** Always *push* the snow to the side rather than throw it. That way you avoid lifting heavy shovelfuls of snow, and sudden twisting or turning movements.
- **Bend your knees:** As with any heavy object, you need to use your knees, and leg and arm muscles to do the pushing and lifting, while keeping your back straight.
- **Take a break:** If you feel tired or short of breath, stop and take a rest. Shake out your arms and legs. Stop shoveling immediately if you feel chest pain or back pain. If you have back pain that is severe or that persists for more than a day after shoveling, see a chiropractor. If you have chest pain that is severe, see a doctor immediately.

This winter, have fun and stay fit

On the slopes, make sure that ski and snowboard bindings are adjusted for your height and weight. Always check the weather conditions and watch the trails for icy patches and other potential hazards.

Dress for the weather. Layered clothing works better to keep your muscles warm and your skin dry so you don't get chilled. You may want to invest in clothing designed specifically for winter outdoor activity (available at your local outdoor or sporting goods store), or layer garments made of natural fibres (like cotton, wool and silk).

Know when to rest. Rest when you feel tired. Stop your activity immediately if you experience sudden or prolonged pain in any joint or muscle. Cool down by stretching, and change into dry, warm clothes.

Stay hydrated. Don't be fooled by the temperature! Your active body needs plenty of fluids even though it's cold outside. Be sure to drink lots of water or juice before, during and after winter sports. Follow these tips, and you're well on your way to having a safe and healthy winter.



Ten tips for maintaining a healthy back

- Exercise regularly
- Follow a healthy diet
- Maintain good posture
- Stretch your spine before and after sports.
- Don't overload your backpack or shoulder bag.
- Stretch your legs and back after each hour of sitting.
- Never cradle the phone between your neck and shoulder.
- Sleep on your back or side, not on your stomach.
- Invest in a good chair, pillow and mattress. It's worth it!
- Have regular spinal check-ups.