



How to safely shovel snow!



Whether or not the groundhog said we'd have six more weeks of winter, we are guaranteed to have more snow this season. Who knows more about avoiding injuries when shoveling snow than your safety director?

When people shovel snow, it's like they're lifting weights in freezing temperatures on uneven, slippery ground while wearing heavy clothing. In addition there are the mistakes people make on top of that: hurrying, lifting too much at one time, and twisting their bodies in to awkward positions.

So here's the scoop on safe shoveling:

- **Allow enough time.** People injure themselves when they try to shovel in a hurry.
- **Ask your doctor** whether you should be shoveling at all. If you're older, overweight, or have a history of back or heart problems, delegate the task or get a snow blower.
- Warm up first. Do some **stretching exercises** so shoveling isn't a shock to your system.
- Wear **several layers** or warm, lightweight clothing in which you can move comfortably. Wear boots with good traction. In very cold weather, cover as much of your skin as possible to prevent frost bite.
- **Spread** salt, sand or kitty litter if the ground is icy.
- Use a **proper shovel**. It should be light-weight, and the blade shouldn't be too large.
- Shovel small, **manageable** amounts of snow.
- Use a **proper lifting** technique: stand with feet at hip width, bend from your knees not your back, and walk to dump snow rather than throwing it.
- **Recognize** danger signs. Stop shoveling and call **911** if you feel discomfort or heaviness in the chest, arms or neck; unusual or prolonged shortness of breath; a dizzy or faint feeling; or excessive sweating or nausea.
- **OR, just call the neighbor kid and let him shovel the snow!**