

Take Caution When Shoveling Snow

The National Safety Council offers the following tips on safe shoveling:

- Individuals older than age of 40 or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful.
- If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.
- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- Take it slow. Shoveling can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically.
- Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than wet, packed-down snow.
- Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way.
- Don't pick up too much snow at once. Use a small shovel or partially fill a large one.
- Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- Dress warmly. Remember that extremities such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots.