

THE SCOOP ABOUT SNOW SHOVELING

Facts

- While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be deadly for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle. Following are tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling.

Safe Behavior

- Individuals over the age of 40, or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful. If you have a history of heart trouble, check with your doctor before shoveling.
- Avoid shoveling after eating or while smoking.
- Take it easy. Snow shoveling is a weight-lifting exercise that raises your heart rate and blood pressure. Warm up before starting the job and stretch both before and after shoveling.
- If possible, shovel only fresh snow — it is easier to shovel than wet, packed-down snow.
- Push the snow forward rather than lifting it out of the way; pick up only small amounts when needed. Your back will thank you.
- As with any lifting activity, use your legs, not your back. Legs should be bent and back straight. Bend and "sit" into the movement, allowing large muscle groups to do most of the work.
- Never work to the point of exhaustion. Take frequent breaks. If your chest feels tight, stop immediately.
- Dress as you would for any outdoor activity. Dressing in layers is best. Take extra precautions to keep hands and feet warm.