

Snow Shoveling Safety

Safe snow shoveling requires **proper preparation**, good **technique** and **knowledge**.



Preparation

- ❄️ Talk to your doctor about this activity and your health status before winter season arrives.
- ❄️ Think twice if you:
 - ❄️ Have had a **heart attack** or have other forms of **heart disease**
 - ❄️ Have **high blood pressure** or **high cholesterol** levels
 - ❄️ Are a **smoker**
 - ❄️ Lead a **sedentary** lifestyle.
- ❄️ Consider hiring a student or using a volunteer service if you are a senior.
- ❄️ Shovel at least 1-2 hours after eating and avoid caffeine and nicotine.
- ❄️ Warm up first (walk or march in place for several minutes before beginning).
- ❄️ Start slow and continue at a slow pace (Suggestion: shovel for 5-7 minutes and rest 2-3 minutes).
- ❄️ Drink lots of water to prevent dehydration.
- ❄️ Shovel early and often:
 - ❄️ New snow is lighter than heavily packed/partially melted snow
 - ❄️ Take frequent breaks.

Technique

- ❄️ Always try to push snow rather than lifting it.
- ❄️ Protect your back by lifting properly and safely:
 - ❄️ Stand with feet at hip width for balance
 - ❄️ Hold the shovel close to your body

- ❄ Space hands apart to increase leverage
- ❄ Bend from your knees not your back
- ❄ Tighten your stomach muscles while lifting
- ❄ Avoid twisting while lifting
- ❄ Walk to dump snow rather than throwing it

❄ When snow is deep, shovel small amounts (1-2 inches at a time) at a time.

❄ If the ground is icy or slippery, spread salt, sand or kitty litter to create better foot traction.

Knowledge

❄ Shoveling snow is strenuous activity that is very stressful on the heart.

❄ Exhaustion makes you more susceptible to frostbite, injury and hypothermia.

❄ Stop shoveling and call 911 if you have:

- ❄ Discomfort or heaviness in the chest, arms or neck
- ❄ Unusual or prolonged shortness of breath
- ❄ A dizzy or faint feeling
- ❄ Excessive sweating or nausea and vomiting.

http://www.toronto.ca/ems/safety_tips/shovelling.htm