

5 Safety Tips for Properly Shoveling Snow

With the amount of snow most regions have received throughout this winter season, chances are you've been required to bundle up and head outside to shovel. While youngsters can usually handle the task of clearing a walkway, shoveling is a highly physical activity and one that can be very dangerous for seniors if the right precautions aren't taken. Here are a few tips to avoid snow shoveling hazards:

- **Warm up first.** This might sound silly but as with any type of exercise, it's important to increase blood flow and circulation to the muscles that will be used as well as the heart rate. Spend about 5-10 minutes walking or marching in place. Also add movements to stretch the arms, shoulders, back and chest muscles.
- **Dress appropriately.** Layer clothing and make sure to dress warmly enough; covering your head, face, and hands. Wear waterproof, non-skid boots to keep your feet dry and to help prevent slips and falls which can be deadly.
- **Shovel wisely.** Choose a small shovel that is lightweight and sturdy. A smaller shovel = lighter loads of snow. Shovel frequently, doesn't wait until a foot of snow has accumulated. Also, push the snow rather than lifting the shovel and trying to throw it.
- **Bend and lift.** Everybody has heard the proper way to lift is with your legs and not your back but it's a lot harder than it sounds. Make sure the knees are bending and straightening instead of leaning forward and straightening instead of leaning forward and straightening with the back.
- **Don't hesitate to ask for help.** Set a limit for yourself and if the snow exceeds a certain number of inches, relinquish the job to a friendly neighbor or snow removal service.

