

# Snow Shoveling Safety

## 8 SCOOPS OF SNOW SHOVELING SAFETY

Shoveling snow can be hard work. There are some tips you should consider to protect yourself from hazards, including cold exposure and physical exertion.

**Fit for the job?** Shoveling snow can strain your heart and back. If you're older, overweight or have a history of back or heart problems, you should avoid it altogether and delegate it to someone else, or use a snow-blower. As with any exercise, consult with your doctor to ensure you are fit enough for this physically demanding activity.

**Warm up.** Before you begin shoveling, do warm-up stretches and flexing exercises to loosen up the muscles and prepare them for the job.

**Lighten the load with the right shovel.** A snow shovel should be lightweight, about 1.5 kg or a little over 3 lbs, and the blade shouldn't be too large. The handle should be long enough so you don't have to stoop and the grip should be made of plastic or wood. As a general guideline, the shovel (blade plus handle) should be elbow height when standing upright.

**Bundle up.** Wear several layers of warm lightweight clothing that's easy and comfortable to move in.

**Pace - don't race.** You may want to get the job over with as fast as you can, but it's better to work at a steady pace. A recommended rate for continuous shoveling is around 15 scoops per minute.

**Push - don't lift.** Push the snow rather than lift it. If you must throw it, take only as much snow as you can easily lift. And remember, the wetter the snow, the heavier it is. Consider using a snow scoop to push the snow instead of lifting.

**Face - don't twist.** Turn your feet to the direction you're throwing — don't twist at the waist. Do not throw the snow over your shoulder or to the side.

**Rest and recover.** Take frequent breaks and drink warm non-alcoholic fluids. In extreme conditions, such as very cold and windy weather, 15 minutes of shoveling should be followed by 15 minutes of rest.

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