



## Shoveling Snow?

*Following are a few reminders to prevent injuries.*

### Select an Ergonomic Shovel:

- Lighter than normal shovels
- Contoured handle is designed to reduce or eliminate bending and decrease lifting
- Some have adjustable handle lengths
- A small, lightweight, plastic blade helps reduce the amount of weight that you are moving - Each shovelful of snow can weigh 20 pounds



### Before Shoveling:

- Cold, tight muscles are more prone to injury than warmed up, flexible muscles.
- Get your blood moving with a brisk walk, marching in place, or another full-body activity.
- Stretch your low back and hamstrings
- Limber up your arms and shoulders with a body hug that you hold for 30 - 60 seconds.



### During Shoveling:

- Always face the snow you intend to lift - your shoulders and hips should squarely face it.
- Bend at the hips, not the low back, and push the chest out, pointing forward.
- Then, bend your knees and lift with your leg muscles, keeping your back straight.



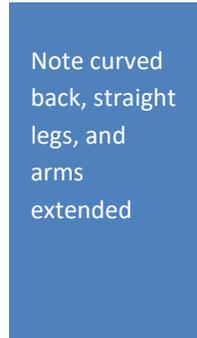


If you must lift a shovelfull, grip the shovel with one hand as close to the blade as comfortably possible and the other hand on the handle

- Avoid twisting the back to move the snow to its new location - always pivot your whole body to face the new direction.
- Keep the load close to your body - do not extend your arms to throw the snow.
- Walk to the new location to deposit the snow rather than reaching or tossing.



Note straight back, bent knees, and load close to the body



Note curved back, straight legs, and arms extended



Hands should be about 12"

- Take breaks - every 15 minutes or so, stand up straight, walk around
  - Pay attention to your body's signals, including pain, shortness of breath, or chest discomfort.
  - Drink water to prevent dehydration and overheating
  - If you see your breath, you are losing hydration



### Be Cautious:

- The heart is a muscle just like any other muscle in your body. When strained, the heart can shut down due to the increased load
- Older adults who aren't active may tax their cardiovascular system when they start to shovel, at times resulting in heart attacks.

