

Snow Shoveling!

If you are like me, you love getting out in the winter air and being active. Skiing, snow tubing and even running are activities I enjoy doing in the winter. Snow shoveling on the other hand is not one of the fun wintertime activities. Given all of the snow we are dealing with I am sure that there are many of you who are dealing with neck pain, shoulder pain (myself included) and back pain. So I wanted to take a moment to offer some free advice on how to make the snow shoveling load easier.

Tip of the Day:

#1 Lift smaller amounts of snow. Rather than trying to get the job done all in one swoop, take smaller loads of snow in your shovel. Remember to use good body mechanics. Use the large muscles of your legs and hips and bend with your knees rather than your back.

#2 Sometimes a shovel with an ergonomic handle can be of assistance. I have used one of these myself and it is helpful. However, if you have the financial means, a snow blower is a great investment.

#3 The spine does not tolerate bending and twisting at the same time. If you ever want a back injury, just bend and twist at the same time. You can ask any golfer how their back feels after prolonged bending and twisting while performing repetitive golf swings. The same is true for shoveling snow. When shoveling snow be sure to pivot your feet rather than twist your spine. In this way you will minimize the pressure to the lower back.

#4 Frequently take breaks. Many times people sustain heart attacks while shoveling snow simply because they do not realize how hard they are working when performing this activity, even when shoveling light snow. Therefore, it is best to take frequent breaks and get out of the prolonged posture of forward bending. The snow will still be there when your break is over, and then you can continue with less stress to not only your back, but also your heart and lungs.

#5 Doing a standing backward bending stretch to reverse the stress of forward bending is essential. To do this stand with your feet shoulder width apart, place both hands in the small of your back, and bend backwards. Hold this position for approximately 10 to 15 seconds, and repeat 4 to 5 times.

#6 Get Help. Many hands make for light work. This statement is true for shoveling snow, cutting grass and most work around the home.

#7 If you experience chest pain/shortness of breath, dizziness or feel faint, STOP and get help. Not later, now!

If shoveling snow or winter related activities are causing you pain and interfering with you performing your daily activities, please consider giving Upper Perk Physical Therapy a call for a complimentary consultation. We can be reached at 215-679-0105. You may also email your questions to me at jay.kauffman@upperperkpt.com. Be sure to check out our website at www.upperperkpt.com.