

Snow Shoveling Safety Tips

Before shoveling, warm up your muscles in your legs, arms, shoulders and back by stretching.

If you must stand on ice, put down salt or sand to give your feet some traction. To maintain the best balance, stand with feet apart at hip-width.

Use an ergonomic shovel with a bend in the handle it will save your back by permitting you to bend less. When you do need to bend, bend at your knees.

Spray the dish of the shovel with olive oil before you start. The oil will help the snow easily slide on and off.

To give yourself the best leverage, space your hands apart on the shovel handle.

Don't put too much snow on the shovel at once. Shovel only truly manageable amounts of 1 to 2 inches at a time.

Protect your back by tightening your stomach muscles while you lift (if you can, push the snow instead of lifting it).

Walk to drop the snow rather than throwing it, but if you must throw it, do not bend at the waist, but instead rotate your entire body to face the direction of the throw.

Slow down. Most injuries occur when people try to shovel too quickly.

Take a break every 5 to 10 minutes to regain your breath. Shoveling snow is like weightlifting, and if you don't take breaks, you put yourself at risk for heart attack.

If you are overweight, elderly, or have a history of heart or back problems, you should forego shoveling snow altogether and use a snow blower or else have someone else shovel your snow.