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WINTER SHOVELING TIPS

by Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC



Chiropractors, we frequently warn our patients that heaving a shovel full of snow the wrong way, can put you out of action for quite a while. So here are a few tips:

As many people have found out already, shovelling snow can be hazardous to your health. It looks light and fluffy, but a shovel full of snow can weight up to 15 pounds, and if lifted the wrong way, can exert up to 225 pounds of additional pressure on one part of your back. The crucial point is the lumbo-sacral disc, the lowest one on the spinal column, and often the primary site for disc trouble. Also poor shovelling techniques have been known to cause shooting pains in the legs or burning, tingling, numbness or pain in the neck, shoulder or arm. As

- Don't start any strenuous outside activity without warm-up exercises.
- Dress warmly, particularly with plenty of coverage of the lower back.
- Don't make your back do all the work. Use your legs and knees a lot when shovelling.
- Don't bend over with a loaded shovel and try to lift it.
- Lift with knees and legs and keep your back straight.
- Don't twist around when throwing the snow away. Set your feet so you can straighten up and throw without turning.
- Change your grip and stance often. So you don't put all the strain on one side of your body.

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