

The Season of Shoveling

Well, summer came and went, autumn made an appearance, and now winter has returned. With winter comes snow and ice (or what we've deemed "shovel worthy precipitation"). It's important to adequately prepare for the season, including your shoveling plan. Shoveling causes around 11,000 injuries per year in the states alone - and we don't want you to be one of these cases!

Our physical therapists have put their heads together to come up with a list of shoveling prep hints - helping keep you injury-free and in the holiday spirit.



Equipment

Like many developments over the years, our shovels have become better with time. Pick a shovel that is ergonomically designed. Shovels now come in all shapes and sizes; choose one that can be adjusted to minimize how much bending you have to do. Additionally, choose a shovel that is light (the lighter the shovel, the less weight you have to lift).

Although a shovel seems like the most important piece of the shoveling equation, don't forget a good pair of snow boots with treads. Taking extra precaution to avoid falls is definitely worth the investment. (Don't forget to sprinkle salt on your walkways, too.)

Prep

Treat your shoveling time just like a workout at the gym. You wouldn't start sprinting on the treadmill after coming in from 30 degree temperatures, so don't start lifting 20 pounds of snow without warming up those muscles. Walk (briskly) around the block prior to picking up your shovel. By getting your blood moving you warm-up your muscles, helping minimize the likelihood of getting injured.

Time

We know, we know, there isn't much. But it's of utmost importance to take your time. Think of the time you will waste if you pull a muscle or aggravate an old injury. If the snow is heavy, it should be removed slowly, layer by layer. Another helpful hint is to set an alarm on your phone/watch for every 15 minutes - take the alarm as a reminder to stretch. If you're feeling the strain on your muscles, enlist the kids to help! (Make sure they warm up as well.)

The Nitty-Gritty

- When gathering snow, keep your face toward the direction you are lifting (avoid twisting with the weight of the snow on your shovel).
- If possible, push the snow with the shovel, rather than lifting the snow and moving it to an alternate location.
- If lifting the snow is unavoidable, grab the handle with your hands placed about a foot apart to provide greater stability.

In the unfortunate event you do injure yourself, we'll get you scheduled and treated before you can say the words, "Is winter over yet?"

Happy Holidays,
HARTZ PT

HARTZ now has a blog! We cover topics ranging from [Healthy Living](#) to [Physical Therapy](#). Gather expert advice without the expert price tag. Visit us [here](#).

Questions? Continue the conversation via Twitter [@HARTZPT](#)

Employee Spotlight:



Bobby
Longenecker,
DPT

[Bobby Longenecker](#) is the newest member of HARTZ Physical Therapy, joining the team just this past August.

Bobby received his Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA, and his Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology from Pennsylvania State University in State College, PA. His specialties include lower extremity and treatment of overuse injuries; this special interest stems from years of long distance competitive running. Just recently, Bobby ran the [Chicago Marathon](#) where he completed the 26.2 miles in 2 hours and 37 minutes. Great job, Bobby!

