

Shoveling Techniques

New Hampshire residents should be experts at shoveling snow! Unfortunately, practice does not always make 'perfect,' especially when the shoveling technique being practiced is not good technique. Bad technique leads to back strain, neck strain, and other injuries. In order to avoid such injuries, always practice good shoveling technique.

- **Buy a new shovel.** If it is necessary to shovel, start with an ergonomically correct shovel. These newer shovels may look odd, but using them should help avoid a back injury or strain by keeping your back straight. Bending over when shoveling increases the stress to your back by ten times.
- **Push, don't lift the snow.** Whenever possible, push the snow aside. Lifting the snow stresses the back. If it is necessary to lift the snow, remember to lift with your legs, not your back.
- **Take time to stretch.** Spend about five minutes stretching prior to shoveling. Your back will thank you for it. Be sure to stretch your back in the opposite direction.
- **Don't do the bend and twist.** Always move in the direction you are shoveling. Don't twist or bend when you shovel.
- **Don't force it.** Care is needed, even when using a snow-blower. Let the machine do the work. Don't wrestle with it and don't try to make it do more than it can handle.
- **Don't shovel.** Anyone with a heart or respiratory condition should check with the doctor before trying to shovel.