

Physical Therapy and Healthy Lifestyles

An informative series on health and wellness

Presented by **Active Solutions Physical Therapy**, a leading physical and manual therapy center located in Boulder, Colorado

Safe Snow-Shoveling

Proper technique prevents injuries during our snowiest month

March has arrived ... and that means bountiful snowfall in Colorado! Like it or not, shoveling heavy snow means a lot of physical exertion to clear walks, driveways and steps. Proper technique is critical to preventing injuries.



Any repetitive activity like snow-shoveling causes muscle strain and soft tissue displacement. Clearing even lighter amounts of snow can lead to various troubles in the low back and shoulders. These can be compounded if you are not lifting properly or feel out of condition. We encourage you to get prepared!

So before you lift that next shovelful, think about how to **safely bend, lift and move snow without straining and injuring the back.** Use proper precautions and shoveling posture to minimize the risk of injury.

Tips for safe snow-shoveling:

- Warm up first by walking around and rotating your shoulders
- Take on smaller loads and breathe easy with every lift - don't hold your breath
- Always lift with your legs, not with your back to prevent strain
- Keep the back straight - this is important!
- Take a break by doing backward-bend exercises, 3-5 repetitions (illustration below)
- Stop immediately if you feel any pain, a "tweak" or a "twinge"
- Use shovels with curved ergonomic handles to help decrease back strain



How We Can Help

We help patients overcome shoveling and related injuries and, most important, demonstrate proper mechanics and specific exercises to avoid re-injury.

If you have any physical therapy question, we encourage you to contact one of our practitioners at Active Solutions Physical Therapy. **We are now offering complementary 10-minute physical therapy consultations.**

Please call (303) 494-4100 for more information.