

## DID YOU KNOW?

You do not need to see your doctor for a referral to Physiotherapy or Chiropractic. If a referral is needed for your insurance coverage, Sheddon is happy to work with you to get this referral after your first visit.

Claims from massage, physio, and chiropractic are all tax deductible expenses

You can read all about us at

[www.sheddonphysio.com](http://www.sheddonphysio.com)

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## Careful Driving and a Safe Winter

Stay alert, slow down and stay in control — the three key elements to safe winter driving. Drive according to current road and weather conditions. Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Avoid situations where you may have to brake suddenly on a slippery surface.

Even with the best preparations, we can find ourselves at the mercy of other driver mishaps. What can we do to prevent any collisions from becoming not only a motor vehicle accident but an injury as well?

Here are a few key hints that will protect you in the event of an accident:

1. Make sure the headrest is up to the back of your head to protect against hyperextension (whiplash).
2. Make sure your seatbelt is secure and over your hips and shoulder (not over the stomach).

3. Go to a walk in (after reporting the accident) and prepare to rest for the first 24 hours if possible. The Doctor may ask you to take medication to relieve some of the pain and reduce spasm.
4. Seek treatment from a physiotherapist or chiropractor. Book the appointment after you see the doctor but wait to come in for 24 hours.
5. Ice the neck and rest in the evening comfortably and allow for some gentle movement but not too pronounced.

Remember that you have the ultimate decision for your therapy, and your repairs to the car. The insurance companies have recently begun referring clients to areas that they prefer. This may not be in your best interest as they are ultimately working with the insurance company. You want a therapist with your best interest at hand...not the insurance company's.

## Shoveling and your Back

Back injuries and pulled muscles are among the potential health threats from using poor technique when shoveling snow. While most people recognize that shoveling snow is very hard work, and can put severe stress on your heart, fewer people recognize the stress and strain that it places on the low back.

Canadian physiotherapists say, "shoveling snow requires as much energy as running 15 kilometers per hour!" Although 15 minutes of snow shoveling benefits a healthy heart, maintaining or increasing cardiovascular fitness, most people don't realize that shoveling wet snow is like picking up heavy weights. One full shovel-load of wet snow can weigh as much as 25 pounds (11 kg).

Shovelers sustain injuries every year from repetitive twisting, improper lifting, over-exertion, or simply by trying to shovel too much snow. Many of these injuries can be prevented by taking the time to prepare and consciously think about how to move properly.

Shovelling can be made even more difficult by the weather. Cold air makes it harder to work  
*(Continued on reverse)*

“shoveling snow requires as much energy as running 15 kilometers per hour”

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## Inside Story Headline

and breathe, which adds some extra strain on the body. There also is the risk for hypothermia, a decrease in body temperature, if one is not dressed correctly for the weather conditions.

Cold tight muscles are more likely to strain than warm, relaxed muscles. The good news, however, is that physiotherapy can be helpful in relieving pain, speeding recovery time for quick return to normal daily activities and preventing the pain from worsening or recurring.

Take time to stretch and prepare your body for activity with a simple warm up of marching on the spot and a few shoulder circles to help tackle

the snow.

**The Canadian Physiotherapy Association offers the following tips to help get a handle on safe shovelling:**

- **Choose a shovel that's right for you** – A shovel with an appropriate length handle is correct when you can slightly bend your knees, bend forward 10 degrees or less, and hold the shovel comfortably in your hands at the start of the shovel stroke.

- A plastic shovel blade will be lighter than a metal one, putting less strain on your spine
- a smaller blade is better than a larger one. This avoids the risk of trying to pick up a pile of snow
- Ergonomic shovels with a bent shaft are very good and have been tested
- **When you grip the shovel, make sure your hands are at least 12 inches apart.** This will increase your leverage and reduce strain on your

## Shoveling continued

body. Always keep one hand close to the base of the shovel to balance weight of the lift and lessen the lower back strain;

- **Lift the snow properly** – Squat with your legs apart, knees bent and back straight. Lift with your legs. Do not

bend at the waist. Scoop small amounts of snow into the shovel and walk to where you want to dump it. Also, spray your shovel with a lubricant or silicon spray so the snow does not cling;

- **Step in the direction in which you are throwing the snow** – This will help prevent the low back from twisting and “next-day back fatigue” experienced by many shovellers;

- **Tackle heavy snow in**

**two stages** – Begin by skimming off the snow from the top and then remove the bottom layer.

- Do standing extension exercises by placing your hands on the back of your hips and bend backwards slightly for several seconds. Because you bend forward so much when shovelling, you need to reverse this by straightening up and bending backwards slightly

- **Dress warmly to conserve your body temperature.**

For example, wear mittens (not gloves); wind-proof, waterresistant, many-layered clothing that will wick perspiration away from your body; two pairs of socks (cotton next to skin, then wool); and a scarf and a hat that cover the ears to avoid heat loss through the scalp.

- **Wear proper footwear** with good tread to help avoid slipping or falling;
- **If you have a health problem or are not in good shape, do not even consider snow shovelling.** Find someone ahead of time to help. Don't wait until there is a lot of snow on the ground before you figure out how to remove it.

