

## **Safe Shoveling Tips**

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With Jack Frost nipping at our toes, keep in mind that outdoor activities can be risky. Snow shoveling, for example, can be especially dangerous. Exercise experts say shoveling heavy snow requires as much energy as running 9 miles per hour! In addition, breathing cold air, and being exposed to the cold all make the heart work harder.

If you are over 45, sedentary, smoke, have elevated blood pressure, are overweight, and/or have a heart condition, play it safe and get someone else to do the shoveling.

Experts warn that snow shoveling is not the exercise to use to start getting in shape. To prevent injury:

- Don't shovel snow after smoking, or eating a heavy meal -- these activities all put an extra load on our cardiovascular system.
- Dress in layers so clothing can be peeled off as the body becomes warm. Overheating puts extra strain on the heart.
- Wear a scarf over nose and mouth to avoid breathing cold air.
- Wear a hat to retain body heat.
- Pace yourself taking frequent rest breaks.
- Shovel safely by bending legs slightly at the knee, letting thigh muscles do most of the pushing and lifting work; this will reduce strain on the heart and back. Use a shovel with a small scoop and keep loads light and small.

*Source: Hope Heart Institute*