

Heart healthy and back friendly snow shoveling tips

Those most at risk for a heart attack include:

- *Anyone who has already had a heart attack.
- *Individuals with a history of heart disease.
- *Those with high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels.
- *Smokers.
- *Individuals leading a sedentary lifestyle.



Be heart healthy and back friendly while shoveling this winter with these tips:

- *If you are inactive and have a history of heart trouble, talk to your doctor before you take on the task of shoveling snow.
- *Avoid caffeine or nicotine before beginning. These are stimulants, which may increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to constrict. This places extra stress on the heart.
- *Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is just as big an issue in cold winter months as it is in the summer.
- *Dress in several layers so you can remove a layer as needed.
- *Warm up your muscles before shoveling, by walking for a few minutes or marching in place. Stretch the muscles in your arms and legs, because warm muscles will work more efficiently and be less likely to be injured.
- *Pick the right shovel for you. A smaller blade will require you to lift less snow, putting less strain on your body.
- *Begin shoveling slowly to avoid placing a sudden demand on your heart. Pace yourself and take breaks as needed.
- *Protect your back from injury by lifting correctly.
- *Stand with your feet about hip width for balance and keep the shovel close to your body. Bend from the knees (not the back) and tighten your stomach muscles as you lift the snow. Avoid twisting movements. If you need to move the snow to one side reposition your feet to face the direction the snow will be going.
- *Most importantly -- listen to your body. Stop if you feel pain... **AND VISIT YOUR CHIROPRACTOR REGULARLY!**