

INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE

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SNOW SHOVELING SAFETY

The Ernest Lofton Fitness Center would like to thank all the participants in the Mile Challenge, Bench Press Contest, and Help the Fitness Center lose 1,000 Lbs. We hope these incentive programs brought a little fun into your workouts.

Shovel Snow Safely

Snow shoveling requires a lot of energy and muscle. It can be a good form of exercise if you are in good health. However, snow shoveling can be a risk for your heart, if you are overweight and don't get much exercise. Even people who are completely healthy and in excellent physical condition can experience back strains and muscle strains. To avoid back injury, consider these suggestions:

- Warm-up! Warm muscles work better, so take time to stretch and get loose.
- Create some distance between your hands. This will help give you more leverage and make it easier to lift snow.
- Maintain the natural curve in your spine.
- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart to maintain balance.
- Bend at the knees not the waist or back.
- Keep your stomach tight while you lift the snow.
- Lift with your legs and not your back.
- Do not twist your body. If you need to move snow to the side, move your feet.
- Never throw snow over your shoulder, always keep it in front.
- Fresh snow is lighter, so shovel early.
- Keep the shovel close to your body.
- Pace yourself – take a break every 15 minutes.
- Avoid caffeine or nicotine before shoveling. These stimulants can increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to constrict. This places extra stress on the heart.
- Drink plenty of water.
- If you have a condition that may be affected by physical activity, contact your physician!

Not everyone is able to shovel snow, for those who can't there are other options. Using a snow blower or receiving help from others are great options. In many communities there are volunteer programs that will help with shoveling. Contact your community for more information. Remember safety first before you begin, happy shoveling!

I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!!!