

## **Protecting Your Shoulder Shoveling Snow**

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Every year in Wayne County the snow eventually falls creating a mess on driveways and sidewalks. While cleaning up, many people develop shoulder pain which can tend to linger for months resulting in difficulty sleeping and pain with general use. There are several considerations to keep in mind to help prevent, and deal with, shoulder pain with shoveling snow.

The most important thing to do prior to digging out is light stretches. There are two very simple stretches that are helpful. First, reach across your body to your opposite shoulder, then apply a gentle pull on your elbow with your opposite arm. Secondly, reach overhead and apply a gentle push on your elbow with your opposite arm. Both of these stretches should be held 30-45 seconds, for 5 repetitions each. Then, remember to keep the shovel in front of you to use your body weight and your shoulders together. Also, remember to turn your whole body when throwing the snow to avoid unnecessary twisting of the shoulder and back. Lastly, remember to take breaks if there is a larger amount of snow than normal. Breaking up activities is much better for your body than over loading your joints for shorter periods of time.

After shoveling, if general shoulder pain is noted, take time to put ice on your shoulder and rest it. If your shoulder is already sore, try to find someone to help you or make sure to break up the task into smaller sections to prevent further injury. If shoulder pain or loss of motion and/or strength lasts longer than 5-7 days, consult your MD to prevent long lasting injury.

The above is intended as general information only. Be sure to contact your physician for advice or your own specific medical problems. Have a question? Write to Questions from the Field, Gananda-Walworth Physical Therapy and Village Fitness, PO Box 162, Macedon, NY 14502, or send e-mail to [gwpt@rochester.rr.com](mailto:gwpt@rochester.rr.com).