

MINIMIZING SNOW SHOVELING INJURIES



GUEST CORNER

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Snowfall is magical and the excitement of playing in the snow can turn into a painful reality when you need to dig your way out of your house as snow keeps piling up. With snow shoveling comes the risk of injuries.

Be smart when shoveling snow. Approach it as your first session in a gym. You can only work out for 15-20 minutes for the first time: pace your body, especially with wet, heavy snow

UNDERSTANDING HOW SNOW SHOVELING MAY LEAD TO INJURIES

Shoveling is a strenuous, repetitive activity and can lead to lower back strain, shoulder tendinitis to name just two. As in the case of any repetitive exercise, you should warm up your body with gentle dynamic stretches that will help to loosen your muscles and joints, improve blood circulation.

WARMING-UP EXERCISES TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF SNOW SHOVELING INJURIES

The following warm-up exercises and dynamic stretches will get you ready for snow shoveling:

- Hold light weights (3-5lb) in your hands and march or walk in place for 5-10 minutes keeping your elbows bent and shoulders down. March with your shoulders and arms as you bring your knees high up to your waist.

- Stretch your hamstrings: place your one leg up on a step, keep your front knee straight and gently lean with your body forward until you feel a stretch behind your leg. Hold for 5 seconds, and move in and out of the stretch; never bounce. Repeat 10 times with both legs.

- Stretch your adductor: open your legs wide, hold onto a sturdy counter and bend your one leg deep down in a side lunge until you feel a stretch on the inner thigh. Hold 5 seconds and lunge from side to side. Repeat 10 times.

- Stand upright with your core tight and gently rotate your body from side to side stretching your arm across your body as you rotate. Repeat 10 times.

OTHER SNOW SHOVELING TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURIES

- Choose the correct size shovel with lightweight material. A bigger scoop may carry more snow, but is more strenuous on your back to lift.

- When shoveling -
 - keep your feet separated with one leg forward and your knees in a soft bent position. Keep your ribcage up, your spine straight, and hinge from the hips slightly forward;

- Bend your knees and not your back;

- Keep the shovel close to your body, and your elbows tucked in. Let your thigh muscles do the work to push the shovel and keep your core tight;

- Avoid lifting the shovel with arms stretched out, because that puts extra strain on your spine and shoulder tendons; and

- Avoid twisting your back. Instead, take an extra step to face with your shoulders and hips in the direction of where you shovel.

- Avoiding shoveling only to your dominant side. Alternate sides; shoveling to the left leading with your left foot and left hand on the bottom of the snow shovel and when shoveling to the right, reverse the above.

- Create distance between your hands on the snow shovel. It provides more leverage when lifting the shovel.

- Lift smaller loads of snow at a time.

- Never throw snow over your shoulder. Instead, go forward with a load to avoid twisting and torquing of your lower back.

STRETCH AFTER YOU SHOVELED SNOW

Gentle stretches will assist your body to relax and cool down.

- Stand on your hands and knees (Quadruped), and do gentle cat-cow movements lifting your head to the ceiling and arching your back as you inhale then tucking your behind and head down, rounding your spine to the ceiling. You can modify this movement if you have difficulty kneeling on your hands and knees: hold onto a sturdy counter, feet shoulder width apart, knees bent and gently arch and tuck your spine. Repeat 10 times.

- In Quadruped lift your one arm up to the ceiling as you gently rotate your body and head to follow the outstretched arm to the ceiling. Then needle through bringing you stretched arm underneath the supporting arm, following the movement with your head and upper body. The modified position can again be done leaning against a sturdy counter. Repeat 10 times.

- Sit on a chair with one leg straight out and foot flexed back. Lean forward with your body until you feel a stretch behind your knee to stretch your hamstring.

Hold for 20 deep breaths. Repeat 5 times.

- Sit on a chair and cross your one ankle over your knee in a “cross 4” position and lean with your body forward to your ankle to feel the stretch in your buttocks. Hold for 20 deep breaths. Repeat 5 times.

- Stand in a doorway with one leg in front and arms up against the doorframe. Lean forward until you feel a stretch in front of your shoulders. Hold for 20 deep breaths. Repeat 5 times.

Stay warm and safe. If you experience any pain or injury, please contact your medical practitioner or physical therapist.

Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing contact@lizelubbept.com or visiting www.lizelubbept.com.



Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy (LLPT) has opened a PT Studio on the premises of Apex Fitness (at Orchard Square at Cross River) to focus on sports-related physical therapy rehabilitation services.

Our PT Studio at Apex will serve the needs of high school and college athletes, runners, golfers and tennis players, devotees and “weekend warrior” work-out gym members, and non-gym members, and other sport enthusiasts to continue their fitness goals, free of pain and to restore full pain-free mobility after injury.

Our PT Studio will be staffed with physical therapists who specialize in working with athletes, young and old. Our team provides dedicated, personable hands-on physical therapy rehabilitation services to help you prevent injuries and, if injured, to accelerate your recovery.

The professional services of our team at the PT Studio include the following:

- A free walk-in basic sports-related injury screening of about 10 minutes
- Guidance on sport-specific warm-up and exercise programs
- Brief assessment and Kinesio taping
- Individualized full PT rehabilitation treatment programs to recover from injury or surgery with full access to all the equipment at Apex Fitness, to get you back practicing your chosen sport, pain-free



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