

Shape Up For Shoveling

It's that time of year. Time to put on the winter tires and time to get your body ready for the upcoming winter season. Every year we hear about people hurting their backs or worse having heart attacks from shoveling snow. It may come down light and fluffy but snow can be very heavy when you load it onto a shovel.

Now is a perfect time to prepare your body and below are some tips:

Performing cardiovascular exercise 3-4 times a weeks on a treadmill, elliptical trainer or even by walking. Your heart is a muscle, when you exercise at 80-85% of your maximum heart rate you will improve your cardiovascular endurance. The benefit of this is that your heart is working more efficiently and can handle stressful activities with greater ease.

Strengthen your core. The core is the foundation of your body; this includes your trunk, hips and pelvic area. When you shovel you are using your arms and legs but without a strong core the rest of the body cannot function at its' best.

Try this amazing 4 minute workout.

Perform the following exercises for 30 seconds to 1 minute (per exercise) 3-4 times a week:

Squats: (*this works your thighs, gluts and trunk muscles*)

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and forward of knees.

Lower hips towards floor until they reach knee height at that point stop and return to starting position then repeat.

Push-ups: (*chest, triceps, back, core*)

In a prone position, place hands at a width that will allow the forearms to be perpendicular to the floor when the elbows are flexed at 90 degrees.

Come into push-up position with elbows extended; make sure the entire body is in a neutral position.

Flexing at elbows, lower the body, maintaining neutral spine. Push back to starting position.

The following exercises are a little more advanced, but still very doable.

Russian twist on stability ball: *(Increased integrated rotational core strength and stability)*

Sit on a stability ball holding either a medicine ball or a weight, slowly roll down the ball until your head and neck are resting comfortably on the ball.

Lift your hips up until they are in line with your knees and shoulders.

Raise arms and medicine ball perpendicular to your torso.

Maintaining a stable pelvis, slowly rotate trunk to each side.

As strength develops, increase range of motion and speed.

Maintain proper spinal alignment

Do not allow hips to drop while rotating.

This exercise can be done alone or with a partner

Chair/Bench dips: *(Triceps & chest strength development. Shoulder stabilization.)*

Keep hips as close to the chair/bench as possible.

Feet together and knees slightly bent.

Hands close to the sides of the body, arms straight and shoulder blades retracted.

Bending the arms, slowly lower the body down until the shoulders are just above elbow height, inhaling while doing this, straightening the arms the body will return to the starting position, exhaling during this phase.

Maintain good form.

Keep reps at a controlled speed.

Only lower the body to where you feel comfortable.

These exercises will certainly get you going, so get ready because like it or not the snow will be here soon!

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