



## BRING YOUR SHOVEL to WORK DAY

# *Practice Random Acts of Snow Kindness while earning points in the Winter Wellness Week Scavenger Hunt*

This year we are encouraging school/building teams to practice *random acts of snow kindness* during **Winter Wellness Week** by shoveling in the neighborhood near the school. Not only will we take part in a Minnesota ritual, shoveling for neighbors, we will build relationships with each other and the broader community, make it easier for winter walkers, and get some great exercise! Indeed, snow shoveling "can be more strenuous than exercising full throttle on a treadmill." Hooray!

Here's what to do:

- Get organized now and make a snow shoveling team—it can be mostly staff or mostly students or a combination of both! Talk with your colleagues and/or students and/or parents to make a team. **Share the snow shoveling tips/safety two page handout with your team members.**
- Identify a team leader and make a plan. Where will you shovel? Can everyone bring their own shovel or how will you get them? Do you want to spring into action when a fresh snow falls or do you know of areas near school that could use attention now?
- If you plan to shovel fresh snow, make a plan for getting in touch with each other on short notice so you can take advantage of a snowfall during Winter Wellness Week. Example—create a group that the team leader can text “Today is the day! Bring your shovel.”
- Gather snow shoveling resources that you can ahead of time, like shovels or even sand. The City of Minneapolis offers free sand. See [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow/shovel/snow\\_freesidewalksand](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow/shovel/snow_freesidewalksand) .
- Print and sign as many as you will need of the show shoveling door “Dear Neighbor” flyer or create your own.
- While shoveling, make it fun and **be sure to upload your pictures to social media with #mpswinterwellness to earn points in the Winter Wellness Week Scavenger Hunt Challenge.**
- Hang the shoveling “Dear Neighbor” flyer in the doors of the places where you shovel. There is space on the flyer for your school team to sign it.

For more information about snow shoveling in the City of Minneapolis see:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/snow/shovel/>

## Tip for Safer Snow Shoveling.

Shane Tolbert, LPT, physical therapist, Indiana University

<http://iuhealth.org/news-hub/detail/5-tips-for-safer-snow-shoveling/#.WE72f9UrL9o>

**Prepare your body.** Tolbert says the body naturally stiffens in cold weather. Stretching a few minutes before you shovel can prime your body for motion. “Anything you’ve done in the past that helps you loosen up is pretty important, whether it’s bending over and touching your toes, or simple things to get your back and hamstrings loose.”

**Take breaks.** Splitting things up into manageable bites takes longer, but short breaks can help you take care of past injuries and avoid new ones from overuse of weak muscles. How often should you rest? Listen to your body. It should tell you when it’s time.

**Choose the right equipment.** “They make all different kinds of ergonomic shovels designed to keep you from bending at the back,” Tolbert says. Look for shovels that accommodate your height and keep you from bending at the back. Shovels with curved handles can also give you a better grip.

**Don’t lift snow—push it.** As much as possible, look for ways to move snow, rather than lift it. The wider the shovel, the better. In heavy snowfalls, sometimes you must lift to get it out of the way. When lifting is required, Tolbert suggests removing snow in layers to reduce weight. Move snow in the direction you’re facing rather than to the side or rear of your body. This helps you avoid unnecessary twisting that can cause sprains or muscle injuries.

**Change your body mechanics.** Not using good form is one of the biggest causes for muscle strains and disk herniation. “The mistake most people make is not bending at the knees and hips, and not using the powerful muscles in the legs, gluteus and core,” he says. “They try to bend at the back, and it’s that repetitive motion that can strain and pull those back muscles.” Employ your body’s strongest muscles (versus lifting with your arms and lower back) by widening your stance and staggering your feet with one foot slightly in front of the other.



If exertion from snow shoveling does lead to pain, Tolbert says you should feel better with 24 to 48 hours of rest and standard first-aid, such as ice. “If your symptoms don’t resolve in that length of time, you should probably see a doctor to guide you in the right direction,” he says.

# Cold Weather Snow Shoveling and Your Risk for Heart Attack

Cardiologist Grace Cater, MD,

from: <http://www.metrohealth.org/shoveling-and-your-risk-for-heart-attack>

Some activities such as snow shoveling, walking through heavy wet snow or in a snow drift, downhill and cross country skiing, snow-boarding, can strain the heart enough to cause a heart attack.

**Snow shoveling can be more strenuous than exercising full throttle on a treadmill. While this may not be a problem if an individual is healthy and fit, it can be dangerous if not.**

Individuals who are at risk of a heart attack during cold outdoor activities include:

- Those with a prior heart attack
- Those with known heart disease
- Those with high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Smokers
- Those who lead a sedentary lifestyle

Such individuals should think twice about shoveling snow and should talk to their doctor before taking on such a task.

## Tips for Protecting Your Heart

### Before You Shovel Snow

- Talk to your doctor before you take on the task of snow shoveling
- Avoid shoveling immediately after you awaken as most heart attacks occur early in the morning when blood is more prone to clotting. Wait for at least 30 minutes and warm up
- Do not eat a heavy meal before shoveling: blood gets diverted from the heart to the stomach
- Warm up your muscles before starting by walking for a few minutes or marching in place
- Do not drink coffee or smoke for at least one hour before or one hour after shoveling or during breaks. These are stimulants and elevate your blood pressure and heart rate

### While Shoveling Snow

- Use a small shovel: shovel many small loads instead of fewer heavy ones
- Begin slowly and take frequent, 15-minute breaks
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration
- Dress in layers, to avoid hypothermia (low body temperature) or overheating
- Cover your head and neck (50% body heat lost thru head and neck)
- Cover your mouth (breathing cold air can cause angina or trigger breathing problems)
- Watch for warning signs of a heart attack, lightheadedness, dizziness, being short of breath, or if you have tightness or burning in chest, neck, arms or back. **If you think you are having a heart attack, call 911.**



Hello Neighbor,

We are celebrating **Winter Wellness Week** in Minneapolis Public Schools and as part of our celebrations we are practicing neighborliness by shoveling snow for our neighbors. Enjoy! Pass it on if you can.

Kindly,

#mpsstrong

#mpswinterwellness

#snowkindness



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