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PEAK CONDITION LLC

Simplicity in Fitness & Nutrition
Crushing the Myths

How to Avoid Injuries While Shoveling Snow

First and foremost, please remember...

Shoveling snow can be an extremely nasty heart attack trigger. Every winter there are many sad stories about middle-aged people (mostly men who are not in good physical condition) suffering heart attacks while shoveling snow. That's because snow shoveling is an intense isometric exercise that has an effect not unlike explosive weight-lifting movements in terms of stress on the heart. Unlike jogging, which gradually raises blood pressure and heart rate, snow shoveling produces a very rapid, steep increase in both.

Throw in the potential heart-stressing effect of low temperatures, and cleaning up after a snow fall can present a serious threat. So it's worth asking your doctor during your annual physical (you DO get an annual physical, don't you?) whether shoveling snow might be too much for you.

Lower back injury is also a major risk. Shoveling snow involves repetitive bending, pushing, twisting and lifting motions- all of which can put extreme stress on the lower back.

People of ALL fitness levels need to exercise caution while shoveling snow, because the combination of high-impact isometric movements and low temperatures can lead to serious injuries.

The following common-sense tips can help minimize the risk of injury while shoveling snow.

Snow Shoveling Tips

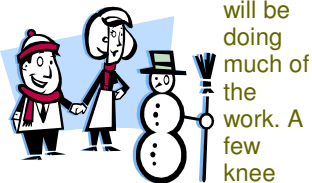
1) Warm Up!

Imagine going to the gym on a cold winter day, finding that the heating system isn't working and the temperature in the gym is below freezing. Undaunted, you walk straight to the squat rack, load up the bar with more weight than you're used to lifting, and still bundled in your winter clothes, grab the weight and proceed to lift it

repeatedly without a warm up. No one in their right mind would do that! Well, if you think about it, that's precisely what most people do when they go out to shovel snow!

As with any type of strenuous exercise, some stretching and warming up before shoveling snow is a very good idea. Be sure to pay particular attention to hamstrings, lower back, arms and shoulders:

these are the muscles that



will be doing much of the work. A few knee bends,

trunk rotations, hamstring stretches and shoulder rolls (extending your arms out to your sides at shoulder height, then rotating in 12-15" circles) will help get the blood flowing and get your body ready to work.

If you'd like more suggestions for stretching/warm-up movements, please feel to contact me. BE GLAD TO HELP YOU.

Remember: putting extreme stress on cold muscles and joints is simply a bad idea.

2) Watch Your Breathing

In many people there is a natural tendency to hold one's breath during exertion. During heavy work like shoveling snow or lifting weights, it's important that you provide your body with the extra oxygen it needs. Be careful NOT to hold your breath while straining to push a pile of snow or lift a heavy shovel full. Breathe in before the lift (or push), then breathe out during the exertion.

3) Take Frequent Breaks

During breaks, take a quick inventory: are you out of breath? Is your heart racing?

Is anything sore? DO NOT ignore symptoms like nausea, excessive sweating, shortness of breath and/or chest pains.

Any of these symptoms can be indicative of a severe problem, and they should be taken very seriously. STOP, GET HELP IMMEDIATELY.

4) DO NOT Lift or Push With Your Back, EVER!

Always be sure to use your legs rather than your back when pushing or lifting the snow. The best way to ensure that you keep stress off your lower back is to ALWAYS KEEP YOUR BACK STRAIGHT when pushing or lifting. Concentrate on bending at the knees instead of the waist. This will engage the large muscles in your legs (especially the quads and "glutes") that are designed for this type of work. A curved back is an invitation to trouble: so straighten up!

5) Use the Right Equipment

It's a good idea to dress in layers rather than just wearing a heavy coat. This will enable you to peel off a layer when you're working and put it back on during breaks.

What about the shovel itself?

Some of the newer "ergonomic" shovels (the ones with curved or z-shaped handles) are specifically designed to take strain off the lower back. They work by enabling you to remain more erect when shoveling, thereby keeping your back straight as described above. These shovels also tend to be made out of lighter material, again reducing the workload on your body.

Following these simple common-sense tips will help lessen the chance of injury while shoveling snow. Remember: BE CAREFUL, take your time and "keep an eye" on yourself! Happy Shoveling!

tasty tidbits.... More fiber



Chances are you've heard about the benefits of dietary fiber. But what exactly is fiber, and what are the easiest ways to add it to your diet?

Fiber and Your Health

A high-fiber diet is known to bestow many health benefits, and research reveals additional advantages all the time. According to Lona Sandon, MEd, RD, a national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association, the benefits of a high-fiber diet include:

- 1) Reduced digestive problems, including constipation, hemorrhoids, and diverticulitis
- 2) Lower cholesterol levels and reduced risk of heart disease and stroke
- 3) Balanced blood sugar levels and reduced risk of diabetes
- 4) Weight loss, because foods high in fiber are more filling and satisfy hunger longer, and because fiber contains no calories
- 5) Possible reduced risk of certain cancers, including stomach and colon cancer

What is Fiber is and why it is so Important to your health?

Dietary fiber is the indigestible material in plant-based foods like **fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and most whole grains**. Unlike the vitamins, minerals, protein, fats, and carbohydrates found in these foods, fiber is not broken down and absorbed by the body, but passes through the digestive system unchanged, and helps the body eliminate waste products.

Types of Fiber

There are two types of fiber: **soluble and insoluble**. Both are needed for optimum digestive health.

Soluble fiber (like pectin and gum) is found within plant cells and dissolves in water. It slows the passage of food through the digestive tract, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels, and helps stabilize blood sugar levels. Soluble fiber can be found in foods like **beans, oat bran, fruits, and vegetables**.

Insoluble fiber (like cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin) can be found in the cell walls of plant foods and does not dissolve in water. Insoluble fiber increases the bulk of the stool by binding with water and softening the stool, helping it move through the digestive tract.

Sources of insoluble fiber include: **whole grains, wheat bran, fruits, and vegetables**.

Many fiber-rich foods, like **oatmeal and beans**, contain both **soluble and insoluble fiber**. As long as you include a wide variety of fiber-rich foods in your diet, ADA experts say, you needn't worry about how much of each type of fiber you're getting.

High-Fiber Foods

As mentioned above, fiber can be found in many plant-based foods, including **fruits, vegetables, and whole grains**. **Beans are particularly high in fiber, containing up to half your daily total in just one serving.**


One easy way to increase your fiber intake is to switch from refined, or "white," grains to **whole-grain breads, pastas, and rice**, which contain significantly more fiber per serving. Compare

Announcing ASK PEAK:

Fitness Q&A @ www.peakconditionfitness.com

Beginning this month, I will be adding a new **FREE Fitness Info** service on my web site. I am opening up a Fitness Q&A section, in which you will now be able to post fitness-related questions that will be addressed by Todd, with input from other fitness experts as needed. I plan to build an archive of the questions and responses, particularly the most frequently-asked question (FAQs), and make them available to visitors to my site.

Please help me get the ball rolling by submitting any fitness related questions via the **Visitor Area** page & leave a comment where it says **"Have a Diet or Exercise Question?"** on this web page, and visit the site frequently to review updates to the **Visitor Area**.

I continue to add to the **FREE** fitness information content at my site, and I am pleased to share it with anyone who needs quality information as an added value to all who visit my web site. I ask that you forward links to my web site to any friends, family and co-workers who you think might benefit from the information. Thank you very much for your help. 

different brands' nutritional labels to find the most fiber per serving.

When it comes to fruits and vegetables, fresh, frozen, and canned all contain the same amounts of fiber. When choosing frozen or canned products, **the healthiest choices are brands that are low in sodium, sugar, and other additives**. Fruits and vegetables prepared with the edible skin on contain more fiber than peeled ones. Fruit and vegetable juices contain **little or no** fiber, so opt for a whole carrot or an orange, for example, over juice.

How Much Fiber Do You Need?

If you're like most Americans, you're eating only about half the amount of fiber you should. Studies show that the average person eats between 12 and 14 grams of fiber a day. The FDA recommends an intake of 11.5 grams of fiber per 1,000 calories, or 25 grams per day for a 2,500-calorie diet. While that may sound like a lot, people can usually meet this daily requirement by eating several servings of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and dried beans a day.

Check labels, as well. Foods with 5 or more grams of fiber per serving can be labeled "high fiber," while foods with 2.5 to 4.9 grams of fiber per serving can be labeled, "A good source of fiber," under the FDA's food labeling law.

Adding More Fiber to Your Diet

Working more fiber into your diet just takes a little creative thinking, most ADA experts say.

You can easily add frozen vegetables to soups; top sandwiches with tomatoes and lettuce; slice fruit onto whole-grain cereal, yogurt, or salads; snack on popcorn; or load up on the vegetable toppings on your pizza.

But beware: Adding **too much fiber too quickly** can cause gas, bloating, cramps, and diarrhea, so it's better to increase fiber intake gradually. When adding fiber to your diet, **make sure to drink extra water, which aids absorption.**

An added benefit of eating more fiber is that foods high in fiber also tend to be more nutritious all around, which helps you improve your dietary health overall.

What Myths Shall We Bust This Month?

Here's a MYTH that is unfortunately very popular with society today...

"You can lose fat from a specific part of your body by doing an exercise for that part of your body." (For example, **abdominal crunches will remove fat from your abdominal area**).

Ok, bottom line folks...You can't spot reduce! **You cannot control where fat is removed from your body.** The one thing everyone wants is a flat stomach. No matter how many sit-ups you do, it won't be flat if you have a layer of fat covering your muscles. Your time would be much better spent doing some quality cardio sessions and making sure you're eating well, which would help you lose body fat than doing more sit-ups.

Many exercise devices are marketed to spot reduce or spot tone a specific body part. The idea is that by using their device you will be able to tone the inner thighs, for example. This is simply not true. It is outright DECEPTION & LIES designed to push your emotional buttons and get you to spend money on a piece of junk that will only end up collecting dust.

Here's a little Physiology 101 to sum it up so you understand better how the body works and stop being deceived and wasting your money: Muscles utilize blood glucose, cellular energy stores and blood fat for energy. Fat is not pulled from the area it is stored in to serve as energy in its own "neighborhood." Once blood glucose levels are low, a hormonal reaction is triggered to metabolize stored fat for conversion to glucose for energy. Fat deposits are tapped in multiple places around the body, not adjacent to the body part requiring the need for energy.

A properly structured strength and conditioning program will result in a leaner body appearance (**when combined with proper eating habits**.) This is in part due to fat loss and muscle hypertrophy (size increase). The amount of toning is, unfortunately, based on one's genetic predisposition for muscle growth and fat storage. We cannot change how our body is programmed to add muscle and store fat.

ADA experts recommend that you get most of your dietary fiber from the foods you eat because whole foods also contain vitamins, minerals, and beneficial enzymes. Dietary fiber supplements should play a secondary role; they can be used to boost fiber intake on days you fall short.

Can Anyone Say "Super-Size Me?"

Numerous studies indicate that Americans are eating twice as much per meal as before. That holds true for portions served at regular restaurants, fast food establishments, and home cooked meals! Here is a very simple formula that everyone can understand: **too much food + food that is unhealthy + inactivity = weight gain, health problems, illness and even death.**

**Choose to Get Active, Eat Right & Stay Healthy!
Life's a Game. Press Play!**

Hi Everybody! I'm a little behind with the newsletter this month, but I think you'll like it, so hopefully it was worth the wait! Be well everybody. ~Todd D.

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