Here's another reason to hate shoveling your driveway (as if there weren't enough reasons already): Nearly 11,500 people seriously injure themselves every year while clearing off their driveways, sidewalks, and more, according to new research from the *American Journal of Emergency Medicine*.

To minimize your risk of winding up in the hospital, lead study author Gary Smith, Dr.Ph., advises using an ergonomic shovel—the kind that's taller and also has a curved shaft—which reduces the amount of bending over you'll have to do. This takes much of the pressure off of your lower back, he explains.

Already aching? Read our Guide to Lower Back Pain to get relief. And make sure to avoid these 5 Cold-Weather Catastrophes.

Below is a closer look at just how Americans are hurting themselves.

—Maria Masters
Snow Shovel Injuries

Body Part Injured

- 15% Head
- 22% Upper Back
- 16% Arms and Hands
- 34% Lower Back
- 13% Other

Type of Injury

- Sprain: 55%
- Lacerations: 16%
- Fractures: 7%
- Other: 22%

Causes of Injuries

- Acute Musculoskeletal Exertion: 54%
- Slips and Falls: 20%
- Struck By Snow Shovel: 15%
- Heart-Related Problem: 7%
- Other: 4%

Men's Health
Sean - January 31, 2011 at 2:14 pm

Let me get this straight; your website is trying to positively reinforce exercise and healthy lifestyles yet you publish this article which reinforces the idea of NOT exerting yourself at all to do a bit of work and get some exercise in too but instead pay someone else to do it and sit the already lard-ass on the couch? What are you saying to your readers? Did you interview those who were injured and find out how fat, out of shape, and ignorant those people were? Who the hell stikes themselves in the head with a shovel or gets in the way of someone else using a shovel? Or tries to move all the snow in one big scoop?
Do you realized you have published other articles that shoveling snow is a good 2-in-1 activity; getting work accomplished and getting the heart rate up while boosting the immunity to the cold?
Maybe it’s time to publish the snow-shoveling workout plan for everyone in the fall to get ready for this “dangerous” activity!

Sean - January 31, 2011 at 6:51 pm

Exercise and strain are different. A lot of people working out know of the risks that can be associated with it and are more cautious. But when shoveling, people don’t usually associate the task with injury or think of slipping on ice during the exertion. It is not impossible for a person to strike themselves with a shovel. People can slip or fall and strike themselves or other people. Not everyone shovels the same way and some people can be reckless and try to shovel too much snow.

Curt - January 31, 2011 at 9:03 pm

Since I started working out and lifting weights (doing what MH prescribes), I can shovel snow like a champ. Soreness and muscle strain from snow shoveling has been greatly reduced.