



SNOW is a 4 Letter Word

Yes it is that time of year again when the cold white fluffy stuff is either a blessing to some or a cursed precipitation to others. Unfortunately snow can come with a variety of pain-related injuries that can hopefully be avoided. Here are some tips that can help you to avoid injury:



Shovelling Tips

Choose a shovel that's right for you – A shovel with an appropriate length handle is correct when you can slightly bend your knees, flex your back 10 degrees or less, and hold the shovel comfortably in your hands at the start of the shovel stroke; ergonomic shovels with curved handles are very good. A curved handle will enable you to keep your back straighter when shovelling; a plastic shovel blade will be lighter than a metal one, putting less strain on your spine; and sometimes, a smaller blade is better than a larger one. This avoids the risk of trying to pick up a pile of snow that is too heavy for your body to carry.

When you grip the shovel, make sure your hands are at least 12 inches apart. This will increase your leverage and reduce strain on your body.

Wait until the afternoon to shovel. Many low back problems occur in the morning when there is increased fluid pressure in the discs because the body has been at rest all night.

Lift the snow properly. Squat with your legs apart, knees bent and back straight. Lift with your legs. **Do not** bend at the waist. Scoop small amounts of snow into the shovel and walk to where you want to dump it. Holding a shovel of snow with your arms outstretched puts too much weight on your spine.

Step in the direction in which you are throwing the snow. This will help prevent the low back from twisting and "next-day back fatigue" experienced by many who shovel.



Tackle heavy snow in two stages. Begin by skimming off the snow from the top and then remove the bottom layer. Avoid overloading the shovel.

Take frequent breaks when shovelling. Stand up straight and walk around periodically to extend the low back. Do standing extension exercises by placing your hands on the back of your hips and bend backwards slightly for several seconds. Because you bend forward so much when shovelling, you need to reverse this by straightening up and bending backwards slightly.

Dress warmly and make sure that your low back is well covered. If your spine is exposed to the cold, your muscles can seize up and result in back pain, muscle spasms and a lack of coordination.

If you have a health problem or are not in good shape, do not even consider snow shovelling. Find someone ahead of time to help. Don't wait until there is a lot of snow on the ground before you figure out how to remove it.

[Heart and Stroke Foundation ← click here](#)

FYI:

Although trying to get an appointment in the months leading up to Christmas can be difficult, the New Year brings with it more flexibility and availability in our schedules.

Same day/same week appointments are much easier to obtain at this time of year!

Pregnancy Massage

The glow and excitement attributed to pregnancy is unique to both the occasion and to the individual experience. It is a wondrous time of growth and development, and with that comes changes. When it comes to the *physical changes* associated with pregnancy, your massage therapist can be just what the doctor ordered. **"48-56% of all pregnant women experience backache during pregnancy."**¹



Back pain, swelling, discomfort associated with uncomfortable sleeping positions and/or lack of sleep are just a few of the issues that are often well addressed by Massage Therapy.

1 Massage Therapy Magazine Canada

Here are some of the **FAQ's** we commonly encounter:

How can I get a massage with such a big belly?

At the point which you are no longer comfortable lying on your belly, your massage is administered in much the same position that you sleep in. A pillow between the knees and/or a body pillow is used. You spend half of the massage on one side and half on the other.

Will it hurt the baby?

Massage *will NOT* hurt the baby when mom is healthy and not experiencing any complications. Deeper tissue massage is also not usually applied in the early and later stages of pregnancy.

Do you massage the belly?

Generally the belly itself is not massaged, however the ribcage surrounding the belly can be massaged for diaphragmatic relief. (*can help make breathing easier*).

Does massage therapy make labour easier?

Being relaxed and not in pain prior to delivery can help to reduce discomfort during labour. Practicing breathing and focusing techniques during massage can also help you to develop a closer connection with your body and it's muscles, enabling you to consciously relax areas that are tight.

What are the benefits of Pregnancy Massage?

- Stress management - physical and emotional relaxation.
- Fatigue reduction and especially helpful for insomnia.
- Pain reduction - as the biomechanics of the body change, muscles can get stiff, tight and achy.
- Relieves tension headaches & headaches caused by any toxic wastes that can build up in the body.
- Increased circulation - increases oxygen to baby and slows progress of varicosities and aids in the reduction of swelling.
- Increases flexibility
- Eases constipation, gas and heartburn
- Reduces excess fluid retention
- Enhances self-esteem and body awareness at a time where the body's shape is changing daily
- Helps maintain skin elasticity and may help to reduce uncomfortable tightness

[Interesting BABY NAME website <-- click here](#)

Sarah Cloake M.T. & Dora Jackson M.T.
are accredited with additional training in pregnancy
massage and infant massage.

All of our therapists, however, are fully qualified and
thrilled at the opportunity to work with our pregnant
clients.

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