

Avoid pain and injury this winter

Safety tips from Madonna TherapyPlus

Cold temperatures and snow can bring joy to people of all ages who love winter sports, but it also brings with it the extra work of shoveling driveways and scraping windows. It is important to be prepared for the cold weather ahead and Madonna TherapyPlus recommends:

Dress for the season

- Wear loose, light weight, warm clothing in several layers. Trapped air between layers acts as an insulator, and keeps the body core warm. Layers can be removed as the body warms with activity. Avoid perspiration and subsequent chill.
- Always wear a cap on your head, since half of your body heat can be lost through an uncovered head.
- Wear warm socks, waterproof boots, mittens and cover your mouth and nose with a scarf to prevent frost bite.

Frostbite: Exposure to cold can cause damage to body tissue. Watch for loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in the extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes and nose.

Hypothermia: Prolonged exposure to cold can cause hyperthermia, especially in children and the elderly. If body temperature drops below 95°, get medical help immediately. Signs to watch for are: inability to concentrate, poor coordination, slurred speech, drowsiness, exhaustion, and uncontrollable shivering followed by sudden loss of shivering.

Physical Exertion: Working or playing in the cold temperatures can put an extra strain on your heart. Heavy exertion, such as shoveling snow, clearing debris or pushing a car, increases the risk of heart attack.

Keep your pace slow and steady.

Take frequent rest breaks to avoid exertion.

If you feel chest pain, stop and seek medical attention.

When removing snow...

- Do not shovel if you have a heart condition.
- Prior to shoveling, it is important to gently stretch muscles to prepare for work and prevent injury.



- If possible, push snow in front of you rather than lifting it.
- Use an ergonomically correct shovel with a curved handle to decrease flexion of the spine and prevent fatigue and injury.
- Bend at your knees and hips, not the waist. Keep the shovel close to your body and use your legs to lift the load, not your back.
- Keep the load light and close to your center of gravity. Do not stand in one spot and throw the load, which requires twisting of the spine. Instead, turn and step to keep your hips and shoulders moving in the same direction.

Drink plenty of fluids, including water and juice, avoiding caffeine and alcohol.

If you experience pain of any kind, stop immediately and seek assistance. If you suffer from persistent pain, speak with your doctor and ask if physical therapy would be appropriate for you.



**Madonna
TherapyPlus**

Outpatient Services

Madonna TherapyPlus clinic locations:

Northwest: 5633 NW 1st Street	434-5905
Downtown: 129 N. 10th Street, Suite 100	434-5900
ProActive: 55th & Pine Lake	420-0004
Main Campus: 5401 South Street	483-9534