



Yoga Poses To Protect The Lower Back And Shoulders While Shoveling Snow!

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Each Year, Shoveling Piles Of Snow After A Storm Is Believed To Cause Tens Of Thousands Of Back And Shoulder Injuries In The United States, Not To Mention Several Hundred Heart Attacks.

Don't let yourself become the next snow-shoveling casualty!

This winter, we are dealing with more snow than we usually get, and we all know we have yet to shovel our last walk this winter.

Think of all the different movements you make when you shovel; bending, lifting, twisting, and tossing. If you're not used to making these movements daily, shoveling can result in serious strain and leave you feeling its effects for many days.

The yoga principles that you apply on the yoga mat can be applied off it too, even while doing simple routine tasks. **Ever thought you could do yoga in heavy snow?** Yoga is a huge help in keeping you activity-ready for things like shoveling. Yoga encourages you to place your body into different positions to stretch and strengthen you everywhere. It is these movements that help keep you strong and limber for those moments where it counts.

While exercising the body and flexing your muscles as you shovel off snow from your driveway, you can also enjoy a yogic experience. Let's see how.

Warm Up Thoroughly. Cold, tight muscles are more prone to injury than warmed up, flexible muscles. Do your back a favor by warming up for five to ten minutes before shoveling or any strenuous activity.

Here are some simple tasks to help you while you are shoveling:

- Try to keep a bend in your knees to keep the strain out of your lower back.
- Engage your abdominal muscles by drawing your navel in and up to help stabilize your core and protect your lower back.
- Keep your shoulder blades back so that the arms have some help in the lift and toss.
- Don't wait until you feel fatigued before you switch shoveling sides - switch sides often.
- Stop and stretch.

Following are the must-do poses during snow time and where you can find opportunity to apply yoga principles:



- **The Plow Pose:** Place the shovel in front of the body on the ground and keep walking forward until the load becomes too heavy to push. **Yoga principle:** This act flexes the muscles as the pressure increases on them. However, ensure that you only push as far as you comfortably can. Do not exert or strain yourself. The whole idea of yoga is to remain stable and comfortable in any pose.
- **The Scooper Pose:** Shovel one scoop at a time and throw it in a logical direction away from your sidewalk or driveway. This routine task-to-do during snow time can serve a dual purpose: clearing out snow while exercising the upper part of the body. **Yoga principle:** Keep your neck and shoulders relaxed, be aware of the breath.
- **The Sweep Pose:** Now that the heavy snow is cleared out, it's time to get rid of the light fluffy snow scattered around. Use the shovel to make erratic sweeping motions in every direction. **Yoga principle:** As you do this, keep your attention on the hand movement and the breath, observe the muscles stretch - be totally aware of what you are doing.
- **The Chop Pose:** Raise the ice chopper in a straight upward motion and bring it down with a strong force until you meet the ice surface that you are clearing. You will feel all the bones in your body shudder, while a small chip of thick ice will also be removed. **Yoga principle:** Observe the shudder. **Can you still maintain a smile on your face?**

So as we see, with a little awareness on the body movement and the breath pattern as you clear out the snow, this routine task can become a yogic experience. Inhale as you push the shovel into the snow and exhale when throwing the snow away from the clearing area. Also, make sure you equally use both parts of the body in all the movements. Do not exert one part more than the other. **And most importantly, stay comfortable throughout the process.**

At the end, it is recommended to lie down horizontally in Yoga Nidra and take a few moments of deep rest. Warning: Lying down outside the house in a snow bank is contra-indicated.

Reward yourself for shoveling snow? When the forecast calls for snow, you know you're going to crave soup. Its soup weather for sure, Warm Up With the following Soup Recipe:

Cream of Spinach Soup:

Ingredients: 1 lb. fresh spinach, washed and chopped || 1 teaspoon cumin seeds || 1 teaspoon ghee || 1 dash of nutmeg || $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cream of coconut or $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups soy or rice milk || 3 cups of water or 2 cups water if using soy or rice milk || Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Heat ghee in a soup pot. Sauté cumin seeds until lightly browned. Add spinach and water. Bring to a boil and cook for about 10 minutes.



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2. Add cream of coconut or the rice or soy milk and nutmeg. Cook another 3 minutes. Place soup in a blender or food processor. Blend for about 5 seconds, just enough to purée it gently. Season to taste and serve hot.

Remember that practicing yoga regularly will help to strengthen your entire body and prevent future shoveling injuries. Learn more at **Apurva Ayurveda Healing**. Come to Us, It's just Yoga.

Always Remember: Self Care Revives Your Nature

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