

# Physical Therapy News

From Your friends at Northshore FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers



## Tips to Avoid Injury During Fall and Winter Activities

With fall and winter come the seasonal chores we are all used to. Things like raking leaves, shoveling snow, digging out stuck cars and pushing cars out of ruts are all chores of the seasons. With these changes in seasons we see an increase in business in our office. More and more people come to our office for physical therapy after injuring their backs while raking and shoveling. The sad part is, these injuries are really quite easily preventable. While we love seeing you, we'd really prefer NOT seeing you more than you think. We want you to stay healthy and these tips are going to help you out during these seasons to hopefully keep you from visiting us. However, we always love seeing your smiling face, so instead of injuring yourself with raking, shoveling, pushing cars and such, we would rather you pop in just to say hello!

Below are some tips to keep in mind over the fall and winter to keep you injury free:

- When lifting, lift with your legs and not your back
- When shoveling snow, you want to push with your legs. You want to bend at the knees and once again lift with your legs, not your back.

• When raking you want to pull the rake in with the power of your legs instead of bending and reaching to pull back.

• Never bend and twist at the same time. This is one of the most common ways to injure yourself and causes some of the most serious back injuries. When you twist and flex your spine there is a tremendous amount of strain on the spine. You have to make sure you do not twist when you are throwing snow from your shovel, also. If you can twist and throw or twist and rake without any pain, that does not mean it is okay to do. This kind of motion wears and tears on the spine itself.

• Do not bend when lifting. Instead of bending at the back to lift up bags of leaves, garbage or even heavy objects as you get ready for the changes in seasons, make it a habit that you bend at your legs to lift. So while you are cleaning and moving things in for the winter, do not fall into the trap of bending over quickly at the waist to pick something up and toss it aside, etc. Know where your spine is at all times. You don't necessarily have to be bending to pick up a large heavy object. You can throw your back out bending at the back just to pick up a piece of paper. It is not simply the weight of the object

you are picking up, but how you are moving your spine to do so.

• Spine Breaks are times you take out regularly to stretch and move your spine from the same constant position. If you are sitting at a desk or one position for a long period of time, you definitely need to take breaks. Stand up and stretch your arms up in the air to stretch out your back. Do this before you are feeling sore and stiff.

• When morning comes, do not immediately crawl out of bed and rush out to get the snow shoveled. Yes, you have to get the snow removed so you can get to work or wherever you need to go, but you want to get up and move around a little bit to get your blood flowing and your body moving. You do not want to go out without bringing your heart rate up before starting any vigorous activity, such as shoveling. While you are shoveling, any pulling, pain or pressure in the chest area is not a strained muscle. Be smart and seek medical attention any time you feel any pain in your chest.



## Time for a Safe and Injury Free Fall Cleanup

Believe it or not, something as simple as raking leaves can cause you some pretty intense neck and spine pain. First off, if you are not used to this type of activity and movement it is very easy to injure yourself. All too often you will stretch to grab as many leaves as possible, bending at the waist and pulling in. This can often cause you to twist your spine and put unnecessary pressure on it. So how can you avoid an injury this fall? Here are a few tips to keep you raking in the leaves without racking up the pain:

- Get a tune-up. No, we are not talking about your car; we are talking about your body. Make an appointment with your chiropractor to see if you are all aligned or if you may need

an adjustment before taking on those mountains of leaves



## Northshore FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers



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## Fall is The Season for Cycling

## Time for a Safe and Injury Free Fall Cleanup

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Taking a wonderful ride on your bicycle is a great way to enjoy the colors of fall. Cycling is also an excellent way to keep healthy and stay outdoors to enjoy the crisp fall air. Unfortunately, we physical therapists see a rising increase of cycling injuries during the fall season also. Most of the typical injuries we treat are related to overuse of the muscles and joints. If you experience any of these problems, do not hesitate to contact either your physical therapist or physician.

### • Hand Discomfort/Pain

One of the biggest issues of pain we find is that tendons are poorly aligned due to the fact that riders often will ride with their hands placed on the brake hoods, which are often not aligned so that the tendons are straight. An easy fix for this pain issue is a simple alignment of the brake hood so that they are in line with the tendons on the thumb side of the hand.

### • Saddle Pain

The easiest adjustment for saddle pain is to make sure that the seat does not have an excessive tilt to it that will cause the pelvis to rock too far forward or back. This is a problem very common for women and unfortunately is a little harder to adjust for.

### • Knee Pain/Hip Pain/Leg Injuries

Often some simple stretching exercises can help prevent knee pain. Strengthening exercises can also help to extend your cycling season through the fall season. Ask your physical therapist to show you various exercises such as the Standing Hip Abduction, Step-Ups, the IT Band Foam Roll Stretch, and the simple but effective Standing Quadriceps Stretch.

Remember, physical therapists are biomechanical experts who know how your body works and how to keep you strong and pain free. If you are having any pain or discomfort while biking, take a moment to visit us to discuss what we can do to keep your biking season long, active, and healthy.

- Stretch out before you begin raking. Limber up with some light stretching about 10-15 minutes before you go out to rake.
- Make sure that you do not twist your body while raking. Twisting your core can cause injury to your spine. You will need more than a simple adjustment if you are twisting your spine while raking. Do not put yourself in pain; keep your spine straight.
- Just like when you are lifting, bend at your knees to rake. Bending at your knees will engage your core muscles instead of straining your back. If you keep from straining your back and back muscles, you can avoid injury and pain later.
- Keep hydrated. Although it is not like working in the summer heat, it is still important to keep your body well hydrated while doing any type of workout. Raking is definitely a form of working out and utilizing your muscles. You will want to make sure you stay hydrated, which also allows you to take a few breaks so you do not overdo things. If you have an extremely large area to rake, be sure to take breaks. It doesn't have to be finished in one single day if it is going to put too much stress on your body.

## Winter Arrives - Injuries Increase

Some of the most popular winter activities, like snowboarding, sledding, skating and skiing are performed on treacherous conditions. They are involved with being on slippery, icy, hard and frozen terrain. Of course one really cannot go snowboarding or skiing without a slippery, snow packed surface, so it is obvious that these winter activities must take place in these conditions. Unfortunately, it is these conditions that make winter activities so dangerous.

Recently, many sports affiliations such as the NHL and the NFL have made the dangers of concussions and head trauma more mainstream and informative to the public. Until recently, a concussion was often just overlooked or ignored; perhaps at most treated as something to watch, but as long as they kept consciousness it was not anything to worry about. We now know better, and with the

many winter activities there is a strong possibility of a concussion happening. Add to that danger that the conditions are right for other injuries such as broken legs, twisted backs and hard landings that bruise tailbones and crack spines. One of the most basic and easiest ways to avoid head trauma during winter activities is the use of a helmet. Helmets are expected in hockey but often we do not think of putting a helmet on to go sledding or simply ice-skating. Each of these winter activities mentioned have a very big chance of causing head trauma and anyone participating should not even think twice about adding a helmet to their equipment.

Spinal injuries are not unheard of either in many of these winter activities. Dealing with a very hard terrain and the possibility of falls and spills also puts you at risk for spinal injuries. Something as quick and easy as

hitting the ground hard while coming down out of the air or running into something like a parked car or tree can cause terrible spinal injuries. Take the time to know your surroundings and wear protective gear. If you are a parent, insist that your child wear protective gear when participating in any of these winter activities; but show them that you too are smart enough to stay safe while playing.

Helmets should always be worn when playing hockey, skiing, ice skating, sledding and snowboarding. There have been numerous studies that have proven that a helmet can reduce the risk of head trauma dramatically. Other ways of reducing the risk of injury include knowing the area well, and looking around before you begin any activity. Be aware of the terrain, the surroundings, things such as large bumps or dips, solid items nearby such as walls, trees, large stones that

may be covered with snow and obvious things like parked cars that you could run into. You will also want to be aware of other people around you. Be certain that when there are children involved, there are always adults there to supervise. Never participate in these winter activities while alone, either. If you should have an accident, you may not be able to get help. Most of all use common sense and you should be able to enjoy a fun and exciting winter filled with tons of outdoor activities that are safe. Never mix alcohol with these activities and act responsibly. Should you end up playing a little too hard and receive a few aches and pains, do not hesitate to contact us to help keep your aches and pains at a limit. Most of all have a safe winter, filled with fun and adventure.

### How to solve Sudoku puzzles

To solve a Sudoku, you only need logic and patience. No math is required.

Simply make sure that each 3x3 square region has a number 1 through 9 with only one occurrence of each number.

Each column and row of the large grid must have only one instance of the numbers 1 through 9

The difficulty rating on this puzzle is easy.

5			8		4			9
		9	6		3	2		
	8			2				5
	1	4				8	3	
8								7
	7	3				5	9	
	2			3				8
		5	2		1	4		
6			7		5			1



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