

Winter's here: Preventing winter-related injuries and mishaps

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Every winter, thousands of Americans are negatively affected by the cold, icy, and snowy conditions our beautiful winters bestow upon us. Below, you will find a list of a few tips and tricks to help you prevent the most common winter related injuries and mishaps.

Slip-and-fall injuries:

- Take your time. Slower and shorter steps will ensure you stay upright on your journey.
- Traction is your friend. Make sure your footwear has good rubber tread. If not, a good pair of slip on ice cleats will work. Note: Ice cleats have the opposite effect on floor tiles.
- Sand or ice melt. At home, keep a good layer of sand or ice melt on your most commonly traveled pathways. Read the bag; there are ice melts out there that are specifically designed to be sensitive on your pet's feet.

Shoveling-related injuries:

- Pace yourself and take frequent breaks.
- Wear traction shoes or cleats and dress accordingly.
- Try pushing the snow opposed to lifting, twisting and throwing it over your shoulders.
- Listen to your body. If you develop severe shortness of breath, begin sweating profusely or have chest pain, stop. If you have concerns, contact local medical emergency services immediately.

Snow blower injuries:

- Never stick your hand into the shoot to unclog snow. Use the provided tool that comes with your snow blower, and

keep the tool on the blower at all times. If you don't have it, you won't use it.

- A jammed auger will continue to advance once the obstruction is cleared. If you use your hand and not the proper tool to clear the obstruction you could be saying goodbye to your fingers.

Driving-related injuries:

- Take it slow and leave early. Drive a speed that is appropriate for the weather conditions.
- Icy and snowy conditions affect your cars ability to stop promptly. Avoid changing lanes quickly and cutting people off; they too need additional time to adequacy brake and stop.
- Don't go below a half tank of gas. If you become stranded and need to keep the car running, that extra gas will be your heat source.
- If you do get stuck and need to keep your car running, make sure the tail pipe is not blocked with snow. This can cause carbon monoxide to leak into your car causing a life threatening situation.
- Invest in a set of traction tires or chains. This will keep you safe and those sharing the road with you.
- Keep an emergency kit in your car containing a shovel, windshield scraper, an extra gallon of windshield washer fluid, warm blankets, extra hats, gloves and outerwear, jumper cables, sand or kitty litter for traction, tow rope, flashlight, water, a high-protein food and a basic first aid kit.

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