



Backdoor Reading From Your Parish Nurse

Preventing Strains & Sprains In the Cold Weather

For many people, the fall and winter months mean raking leaves, completing home repairs before the cold weather sets in, shoveling snow and chopping firewood. These outdoor activities can, however, have an unwanted side effect – **acute pain caused by strains (the stretching or tearing of muscles or tendons) and sprains (the stretching or tearing of ligaments).** In fact, one in five injuries ex-

perienced by adults aged 25-64 result from working around the house or yard, with strains, sprains and bruises, or other superficial injuries accounting for the largest proportion of ER visits.

Back pain is particularly common, and one of the most frequently cited reasons for visits to family physicians. More than 1 of 3 adults report suffering from acute back pain in the last year. Using back muscles in activities

you aren't used to, like lifting a shovel of heavy, wet snow, is the most common cause of low back injuries.

Acute pain injuries pack quite a punch. 4 out of 5 sufferers report that their pain affects their quality of life, from jobs to other health issues.



Some Tips To Help Prevent Acute Pain Injuries During The Fall and Winter

- **When lifting heavy objects** such as snow, bend your knees and squat to pick up the object. Keep your back straight, and hold the object close to your body as you rise.
- **When trying to move a heavy object**, its better to push that item away from you, rather than try to pull it towards you.
- **If you must sit at your desk** or at the wheel of a car for long periods, be sure to schedule breaks to stretch.
- **Wear flat shoes or shoes with low heels.** (one inch or lower.)
- **Exercise to keep your back muscles strong** - it's among the best ways to minimize the risk of back pain.

HAVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY FALL AND WINTER!

