

Hays doctor says to not let recent snow, shoveling become a pain in neck, back

By **KALEY LYON**

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Snow is on the ground once again.

That only can mean that, once again, area residents are reaching for their snow shovels.

But before you start scooping out your drive, it's important to keep a few safety tips in mind to prevent a shovel-

ing-related injury, said Dr. Robert L. Bassett, a surgeon with Hays Orthopaedic Clinic.

"The biggest thing is moderation," he said. "The key thing is to — if you're an adult shoveling — go slowly, admire your work and don't try to do it all at once."

Too much shoveling at one time can be strenuous on the back, and the

exertion also can cause chest pain and cardiac issues, Bassett said.

It's important to lift from the legs instead of the back, and to avoid twisting the back or throwing snow over the shoulder whenever possible to avoid stressing ligaments of the back, he said.

Furthermore, it's a good idea to remove the snow as soon as possible, rather than waiting until it becomes

packed and difficult to remove, Bassett said.

In addition to setting a slow pace, it's important to stop for a breath and a rest when it's needed, and it might be best for younger people to do the bulk of the work, Bassett said.

"That's what you have teenage children for, is to do your shoveling for you," he said with a laugh.

Another hazard that comes with snow is the inevitable ice that could form when the snow has been traveled on for a few days. Slipping on ice often results in broken wrists and hips, so it's important to use caution while shoveling snow and walking outside, he said.

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