



Stay Healthy While Shoveling Snow

At our practice, we care about your foot and ankle health — and your overall health, too! When winter weather strikes, clearing snow off sidewalks, curbsides, and the driveway isn't far behind. Here are a few safety reminders.

Warm up before you head out to shovel, which is a serious workout. Five or 10 minutes of stretching out the whole body is time well spent.

Dress appropriately. Wear layers of clothing, which helps trap heat. Another beauty of layers is that if you get too warm, you can remove one.

In addition, wear warm, moisture-wicking socks (try merino wool) and water-repellent boots that cover the ankle — better for ankle support and keeping out snow. Good tread is important as well, and steer clear of heels!

If your current shovel isn't an effective nonstick one, a quick spray of cooking oil can help. And proper shoveling technique means everything. You've heard it before: Bend at the knees and concentrate the lifting power in your legs, not your back.

Map out your plan of attack. First clear out the areas closest to where you'll be dumping the snow. Then the farther ventures will include a clear path to your destination. Take plenty of breaks and properly hydrate.

Stay alert to counter melting snow that runs onto cleared areas and then refreezes. Your ankle joint is vulnerable to serious injury from hard falls on ice because ice greatly accelerates the fall and your feet can fly every which way after slipping. Fractures and sprains are unfortunately all too common this time of year.

If winter stakes a claim on a foot or ankle, schedule an appointment with our office to find relief.



Wintertime Brings Out Ingrown Toenails

If you've ever had an ingrown toenail, you already know how annoying they can be. Those who dillydally on treatment are asking for trouble, such as escalating pain, tenderness, redness, swelling, and possibly infection — always serious but especially so for diabetics.

The following elevate your risk of an ingrown toenail:

- Neglecting to trim your nails straight across (no rounding!).
- Trimming your nails too short.
- Suffering an injury (e.g., direct trauma) or engaging in sports that pound on the feet.
- Wearing shoes that cram your toes.
- Being overweight.

Wintertime increases the odds of ingrown nails because people are more frequently wearing boots, heavier shoes, and thicker socks, which can compress the toes and interfere with how nails grow out. Shoes with a small toe box and socks that are too tight double the trouble. (As for bulky socks, there are plenty of synthetic and synthetic-natural fibers that are thinner, warm, and effectively wick moisture.)

In addition, feet aren't on display like they might be during warmer weather, so people sometimes get a little lax with foot and nail grooming, paving the way for ingrown nails. In addition to proper nail trimming, wash your feet daily, and dry them thoroughly.

If you are suffering with an ingrown nail, give our office a call. Oftentimes we can gently lift the nail, then place cotton or a splint under the nail to keep it raised so it grows above the skin edge. Removing the section of nail that's digging into the skin is another option, or we might recommend a full nail and tissue removal in some circumstances (e.g., chronic cases). A prescription antibiotic — oral or topical — may be part of the treatment, too.

Mark Your Calendars

- Jan. 1** New Year's Day: Sauerkraut ("sour cabbage") originated in China 2,000 years ago.
- Jan. 4** Trivia Day: Sudan has nearly twice as many pyramids as Egypt.
- Jan. 6** Epiphany: The Magi who visited Jesus were not named in the Bible, nor was their number mentioned.
- Jan. 15** Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Dr. King has had two resting places — Southview Cemetery and now the King Center, both in Atlanta, Ga.
- Jan. 21** Squirrel Appreciation Day: Bushy-tailed, industrious, jittery, birdseed-stealing attic trespassers. Gotta love 'em?
- Jan. 23** National Handwriting Day: Cursive handwriting was eliminated from the Common Core Standards for K-12 education in 2010.
- Jan. 27** Chocolate Cake Day: German chocolate cake has nothing to do with Germany. It was named after American Sam German.



The Naked Truth About Gyms

“Going to the gym” isn’t a modern invention. We can thank the ancient Greeks for the gym experience — in part. They incorporated fitness into their culture and philosophy of life. In fact, the word gymnasium is derived from the Greek roots *gumnazo*, meaning exercise, and *gumnos*, meaning naked.

In ancient Greece, gymnasiums were where men went into extensive training (sans clothes) for battle and sports. Workout sessions were followed by communal bathing, possibly a massage, and accompanied by educational pursuits. Gymnasiums hosted speakers to enlighten the masses and trigger discussion about issues and interests of the day.

But why the potentially treacherous nude workouts? Historians have some possible answers.

Working out au naturel encouraged appreciation of the male body and was a tribute to the gods. Zeus in particular was the focus for Olympic competitors. The climate in Greece was/is warm enough to accommodate naked exercise enthusiasts.

It was also customary to coat the skin with oil before exercising. The oil served as a sunblock and prevented dirt from clogging one’s pores. After a workout, oil, sweat, dirt, and dust would be scraped/wiped off the body prior to bathing. The oil alone would have made a mess of clothing had it been worn, so nudity may have had an economic aspect to it. The average ancient Greek did not have a lot of clothes, and doing laundry wasn’t a snap of the fingers.

Ideals of democracy might have been in play, too. If all were stripped of their clothes, the poor and wealthy would be of equal standing at the gymnasium.

The next time you go to the gym, think about its immodest beginnings. But pledge to keep your clothes on till you hit the showers.



Hasselback Caprese Chicken

Servings: 4; prep time: 25 min.; additional time: 25 min.; total time: 50 min.

Using the Hasselback technique (cutting crosswise slits every half inch along the chicken breast) cooks the chicken faster and ensures you get a burst of flavorful, gooey filling with each bite. This quick one-pan, high-protein, and veggie-packed dinner is easy to make, and the whole family will love it!

Ingredients

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (8 ounces each)
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 1 medium tomato, sliced
- 3 ounces fresh mozzarella, halved and sliced
- ¼ cup prepared pesto
- 8 cups broccoli florets
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat a large, rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Make crosswise cuts every 1/2 inch along both chicken breasts, slicing almost to the bottom but not all the way through. Sprinkle chicken with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Fill the cuts alternately with tomato and mozzarella slices. Brush with pesto. Transfer the chicken to one side of the prepared baking sheet.
3. Toss broccoli, oil, and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a large bowl. If there are any tomato slices left, mix them in. Transfer the broccoli mixture to the empty side of the baking sheet.
4. Bake until the chicken is no longer pink in the center and the broccoli is tender, about 25 minutes. Cut each breast in half and serve with the broccoli.

Recipe courtesy of www.eatingwell.com.

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When Cozy Leads to Discomfort

A pair of cozy slippers after a tough winter's day can hit the spot. Slippers can be fine if you're mostly just propping up your feet. But wearing them all day or doing a lot of walking in them can lead to unintended consequences.

Most slippers lack arch support, cushioning, and stability, which can lead to problems like plantar fasciitis, arch pain, and heel spurs. To compensate for the lack of stability, a wearer often changes the way they walk, resulting in fatigued muscles and strained joints.

Due to their loose-fitting nature, slippers more easily fall off the foot or get caught on objects, causing the wearer to trip and fall. Older Americans are more vulnerable to falls, and they're also more likely to wear slippers — a bad combination. They should opt for more stable, supportive shoes, even indoors.

If the slippers are slip-ons, the wearer's toes are forced to grasp the slipper to lift it off the ground and carry it forward since there's no slipper around the heel. Walking too much with these conditions can result in hammertoes, a callus on the ball of the foot, or bunion exacerbation.

Slippers also don't offer much protection against sharp objects and toe stubs. Many don't have anti-slip rubber soles, and they don't accommodate orthotics.

Slippers are often a breeding ground for bacteria and fungi due to the accumulation of moisture from sweat. Smelly slippers, athlete's foot, and toenail fungus might be around the corner.

Here's some good news on slippers. The American Podiatric Medical Association has a list of APMA-accepted/approved slippers that provide what your feet need and are comfortable to boot. Check out their website at www.apma.org. Additionally, New Mexico Foot & Ankle Institute offers APMA-approved Dr. Comfort slippers for purchase in our office. These slippers are designed to provide both comfort and support for individuals with diabetes.

