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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

“Crappy” Way to Hurt Your Back

Before this week, I never would have thought that I would have had any justification to write an article on the proper way to shovel manure, aka “cow poop”. Over the past two weeks, we have been inundated with people who have injured their neck/shoulder or low back region from shoveling manure that they purchased from the local “dry-grad poop sale”. Although the quality of the poop was good, the quality of the shoveling technique left something to be desired. Therefore, today we will discuss how to shovel and use a wheelbarrow safely.

When shoveling, repetitive bending and twisting of the back will eventually lead to problems. The lower back is generally a strong and stable part of the body. However, when used improperly, it is not able to work efficiently and the stress on it is increased. Whenever you are shoveling, both of your feet should be planted firmly and your pelvis should be facing wherever the shovel is digging. Digging at an angle or at the side of your body will put your back in a twisted and vulnerable position. This is especially true when digging in front of you and then twisting to throw the dirt to a different spot. Doing this for a long period of time is really a bad idea. If you have to move dirt from one spot to another, dig in front of you and then turn your feet and pelvis to face the spot where the dirt is to be deposited. This prevents your back from twisting at all and keeps it in a safe position. In addition to not twisting your back, keeping it straight is just as important. Imagine sitting up straight in a flat back chair. This is the type of position your back should be in when doing any lifting or bending. Just remember to keep a small shallow concave curve in the low back. When this curve reverses or becomes convex, your back is in a vulnerable position. When using a wheelbarrow, the same rules apply. Keep your back straight when lifting and pushing the wheelbarrow and don't twist your back. Do not fill the wheelbarrow completely full, as it will be “tipsy”. If the wheelbarrow is in the process of tipping and the person tries hard to prevent it, this is a prime situation for a back injury to occur.

Preventing a neck or low back injury from happening in the first place is the most logical cure. Therefore, regardless of what you are shoveling, keep these suggestions in mind. As well, see your chiropractor regularly to maintain proper mobility in the joints and flexibility of the muscles throughout your spine.