



Winter Holidays can be “bad for the back”

Winter holidays apply more stress on the back than any other body part. The Centers for Disease Control estimates 5,800 American will go to the emergency room this season with back injuries related to falls putting up holiday decorations alone.

Twin Cities Pain Clinic Medical Director Andrew J. Will, M.D. draws attention to the common pitfalls and ways we can prevent back injuries over the holidays.

While outside...

- Wear rubber-soled shoes or boots to prevent falls. You live in Minnesota and we should expect to see snow and ice on the sidewalks and parking lots.
- While shoveling, mind your posture and watch your step as you bend, stoop and stretch. Take your time and don't overload the shovel.
- When shopping, ask a store clerk for two shopping bags and distribute your items evenly into both bags to avoid straining or pulling your back and shoulders to one side.
- Give yourself permission to stop and rest while out shopping.
- Enjoy the ice skating, hockey and sledding with the kids in moderation and remember your age.

While at home...

- Prepare meals on a work surface that is comfortable for you or at elbow level.
- Stand on a rubber or cushioned mat to avoid muscle fatigue and back ache.
- When taking heavy pans from the oven, lift from the knees, not the waist.
- Avoid too much weight gain – excess weight adds stress on the spine.

Acute low back pain is the fifth most common reason for all physician visits in the U.S. Five out of ten working adults suffers from episodes of back pain every year.