

ecotip

Easy Does It

Best Snow Removal Tips

For homeowners in colder regions, winter calls for snow removal. Driveways and walks need to be cleaned off for function and safety with as much ease as possible. Here are some tips from *OldHouseWeb.com* that can help.

Clear the snow early in the day and then let the sun's radiant heat warm the surface to keep it safe and dry. Be kind to yourself—shovel before the snow reaches more than a few inches high. Removing relatively low layers several times is less taxing on the body than waiting and trying to deal later with a higher pile from a major storm. Make sure to bend at the knees and keep the back as vertically straight as possible when shoveling, to avoid back strain.

If opting for a snow blower, an electric machine is cleaner, quieter and easier to maintain, especially if it has solar panels. For more power, consider a diesel-powered unit that uses bio-diesel fuel. As a step up from old-fashioned fossil fuel machines, Honda makes a hybrid model with emissions 30 percent lower than Environmental Protection Agency Phase 2 standards.

Putting down some sand or black wood ash on dry surfaces will effect more traction during snow removal, plus help melt and evaporate some snowflakes when they land. A green option is EcoTraction, made by Earth Innovations from hydrothermal volcanic materials that absorb water. Sand should be used sparingly because it can clog local storm drains and create excess silt in waterways.

When considering ice-melting agents, be careful and wise. Many products claim to be green or eco-friendly, but contain harmful chlorides or acetates. Salt is bad for pets, grass, plants and vehicles, and will pollute local waterways. Products containing acetates are generally less corrosive than salts, but recent research has shown that potassium acetate, often used at airports, is toxic to marine life.



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