LIFE Out HERE

Handle Any Winter Storm with the Ideal Snow Blower

When wintertime rolls around, you can't help but love all that it brings. The holidays give us time to spend with loved ones, make memories and appreciate one another. It also delivers a fair share of crisp, cool weather, giving you the perfect opportunity to snuggle up by the fire and get cozy. But while these are all great things, some people will also need to think about snow removal. When you require speedy, convenient solutions for eliminating slippery snow from driveways and sidewalks, turn to the snow blowers at Tractor Supply.

Browsing Snow Blowers by Stage Type

Snow blowers offer convenience all winter long, saving us time from having to shovel driveways and walkways. Equipped with an auger, these machines work to break down snow, lifting it and tossing it away from your area. But before buying a snow blower, you should look at the type of terrain you have, typical snowfall in your area and how much space you need to clear. This helps you decide how much power your snow blower should have.

When looking at snow blowers, you might see them labeled as single-stage, two-stage or three-stage. The stage type determines how powerful your snow blower is – so, the higher the stage type, the more power it'll deliver. For instance, two-stage models throw snow much farther and faster than single-stage options. These types differ the following ways:

Single-Stage Snow Blower

Single-stage snow blowers are your most basic, lightweight option, making them suitable for level, paved and mid-sized driveways, as well as areas that don't receive heavy snow. Great for clearing wet and light snow, these snow blowers are smaller in size, offering easy maneuverability into tight spaces. They work by using an auger, which collects the snow and pushes it out for convenience.

You should only use these types of snow blowers on level ground, or on paved surfaces with a slight incline. This is because the auger hits the ground as it moves, meaning gravel driveways or sloped walkways can damage components if using a single-stage model on these areas. In this case, you must add accessories, such as skid shoes, to help give augers slight elevation, allowing for easy snow removal on unpaved terrain.

Two-Stage Snow Blower

Two-stage snow blowers use two parts to move snow – an auger and an impeller. The auger on these models features a corkscrew shape, helping it to turn slowly. These snow blowers allow for use on gravel surfaces, as the auger construction rests about one inch above the ground, so components won't collect rock and debris, unlike single-stage options.

Ideal for medium-to-large driveways and areas that experience much snow, these snow blowers come with a wider path clearance, allowing you to clear away more snow in one go. The larger auger size makes them perfect for removing compacted, icy and wet snow and ice. They are also able to work in deep depths, featuring engine-driven wheels to allow for simpler pushing up inclines and enhancing user comfort.

You can often find more special features on two-stage snow blowers than their single-stage counterpart. For example, we offer options with dual-grip steering or heated grips, allowing for easy control and comfortable use.

Three-Stage Snow Blower

Three-stage snow blowers clear heavy snow, offering heavy-duty snow removal for many different terrains and areas that receive a lot of snowfall. Similar to two-stage models, these use both an auger and impeller to move snow. However, three-stage options have the added power of an accelerator, which comes center-mounted and spins much faster than traditional auger components. This assists augers in collecting snow and pushing it out of the chute for speedy snow collection.

Three-stage snow blowers deliver professional-grade power, giving you the durability needed to cut through and break down wet, heavy and thick snow and ice. They're even powerful enough to take down high walls left behind from snow plows on the edges of streetways.

Looking for Snow Blowers by Power Type

Alongside the stage, you also need to think about how you want to power up your snow blower. Our range of snow blowers feature single- and two-stage setups in electric and gas options:

Electric Snow Blowers

Electric snow blowers use consistent electricity or battery power to clear snow in smaller paved areas, such as patios, walkways and porches, with other options built durable enough to handle small-to-medium driveway sizes. These snow blowers are often easier to use, with features like push-start, meaning beginners can rev up their machines with the simple push of button. This is different from recoil-start snow blowers, which require much more energy and effort to fire up.

Many beginners and regular homeowners enjoy electric models for their ease of maintenance compared to other choices. They're also lighter and have a more compact construction, allowing them to be easier to store.

We offer two types of electric snow blowers, including:

Corded Snow Blowers

These use a cord to achieve power, giving you less vibrations during use and quiet operation. They are designed to be easy to operate – simply plug them in and go. These types of snow blowers are best used alongside gas-powered options to deliver ultimate blowing power. However, because of its corded construction, you may need an additional extension cord (one built for heavy-duty outdoor use), so you can reach all areas of your driveway.

Corded snow blowers offer much convenience throughout the snow removal process, delivering enhanced flexibility in cold weather. You won't have to worry about running out of battery and waiting for machines to charge, such as with cordless options. They also require less maintenance than other snow blower types and are often quieter than gas models. But if you're looking for something more durable and heavy-duty you should opt for a gas-powered snow blower.

Cordless Snow Blowers

Instead of needing constant corded power, cordless blowers use batteries, giving you easy maneuverability around yard spaces and driveways. These are ideal for areas that see heavy snowfall, as well as large-sized walkways and paved terrains.

Because of the lack of cord, battery snow blowers allow you to move freely without worrying about running out of cord. They are also quieter to operate than gas models. Our cordless snow blower options feature self-propelled designs, which allow for easier driveway clearing.

Gas Snow Blowers

Gas snow blowers are your traditional snow blowing option, offering easy portability without the cord, similar to cordless snow blowers. Instead of focusing on keeping cords out of way, all you need to worry about is adding gas fuel to achieve heavy-duty snow removing power.

These models typically come with a larger intake height and clearing width than electric versions, meaning you can clear more snow in one sweep. Use them to handle mid-to-large-sized driveways and commercial applications on both paved and unpaved surfaces.

While common types of gas snow blowers are single- and two-stage, you can also find three-stage options with gas power. Most three-stage blowers are gas-powered, as it gives these rugged machines the power they need to get through heavy snow. Electric models run at a lower power output, meaning they won't produce enough energy to handle thick, icy conditions.

Our selection of three-stage snow blowers ranges from electric to pull-start ignition types, and it features many capabilities, such as adjustable chutes, headlights or heated handles. Keep in mind that while gas-powered models are more powerful, they can also be more challenging to move around driveway spaces, as you must account for the weight of fuel and fuel systems.

Finding the Right Snow Blower for the Job

Before buying a snow blower, you must assess many aspects about your driveway, such as how large it is and what it's made with. For example, you can't use single-stage blowers with gravel driveways, as the auger's close connection to the ground can easily snatch up and launch rocks and other debris. You also don't want to use single-stage models with sloped driveways, as this can damage your yard or driveway, as well as the inner workings of your snow blower. For these driveways, a two- or three-stage snow blower is recommended.

To find the right option for your area and driveway type, you can narrow down your choices with your preferences for:

Start Type

Maybe you enjoy the traditional cranking of a gas-powered snow blower. However, many people want easier methods for removing snow, especially those with mobility restrictions. In this case, you should find models with push button start, offering easy, convenient operation at the push of a button and saving your back from having to hunch over and crank gas setups.

Electric-start options use the same push-button technology, but they require you to plug in your machine before use. This start type doesn't just apply to electric-powered snow blower models – they can also include gas options, eliminating the need to tug on a pull cord and allowing easy use.

Pull/recoil start types means they come with a built-in crank attached to a cord. To start these models, you must repeatedly tug on the crank until the engine roars. While many homeowners and professionals prefer these models, they can be more challenging to start than other types. Additionally, the constant pulling action can end up adding more damage to components in the long run.

Frame Material

The material of your snow blower, especially the discharge chute, can determine its performance in a variety of conditions. For example, steel can be more durable than other materials. However, it also rusts from moisture exposure and becomes damaged easily through chipping and denting, meaning it may not hold up well in the long run.

While plastic chutes may not seem like a durable option, they're actually better to use and more long-lasting than other materials, such as aluminum, steel or metals. This is because plastic has more flexibility than metal, meaning it will hold up better against cracking in cold, snowy conditions. Plastic is also naturally slippery, decreasing the likelihood that your snow blower becomes jammed or stuck with snow. In other words, opting for a plastic chute means you can keep snow blowing – without disruptions and materials that will get in the way.

Snow Blower Features

We all want our everyday tasks to be convenient, quick and efficient. Finding a snow blower with special features can deliver just that. Depending on what you need out of your snow removal experience, browse our options with a variety of different features, including:

- **Self-propelled:** This guides and directs movements down your driveway, meaning you won't have to exert as much energy for pushing, such as with traditional models.
- **Power steering:** This allows for more powerful turns in heavy, thick snow conditions and decreases user fatigue by assisting with forward movements in the wheels.
- **Heated handgrips:** These feature specialized heating technologies to warm up handgrips, keeping hands comfortable and functional.
- **Electric chute rotation:** This lets you control the direction that you throw snow with just a push of a button.

Frequently Asked Questions About Snow Blowers

What's the difference between a snow thrower and a snow blower?

Snow throwers are your more basic snow removal machines, as they only come in single stage, throwing snow in a single motion. Single-stage snow blowers work similarly in that they also collect and throw snow. However, these two- and three-stage machines have an added component that allows you to toss snow to farther distances, called an impeller. Traditional snow throwers toss snow anywhere from 15 to 20 feet away, while snow blowers can throw distances up to 35 feet or farther.

While similar, snow throwers are built less powerful and smaller than blowers, making them better for handling tighter areas with light snow. Throwers are a more affordable option, however, snow blowers often come with special features that allow for more convenient, efficient snow removal. For example, snow blowers have self-propelled technology that essentially push the machine for you, giving you easier steering control and preventing fatigue from having to haul machines through thick, heavy snow. Snow throwers do not have this feature, meaning you'll want to use them to clear light, fresh snow.

How do I maintain my snow blower?

Gas snow blowers require more maintenance than electric versions, as you must complete regular oil changes and gasoline refills to keep them running as they should. Different models will use different gas types – for example, blowers with two-cylinder engines use a mix of both oil and gas, while four-cylinder engines rely on gasoline (with a separate space for oil).

To drain oil, you must first remove the old oil and gasoline mixture, replacing it with a new one. After you're finished, you must ensure all drain plugs are fully tightened to prevent leakage during use. For electric snow blowers, you should check the battery and charge hold, as well as wiring, for damage.

Regardless of the type you have, you should inspect belts and other components, such as cords, screws and bolts. Single-stage snow blowers will have one belt, while two-stage options include two. You want to look for signs of wear or damage, such as cracks, and replace belts as needed. You should also ensure belts are tight before operating.

What's the best way to get rid of snow using my snow blower?

Many homeowners wait for snow to stop before tackling their driveway and other spaces – what's the point in removing snow if you're just going to get more? But the truth is, waiting for snow to stop before removing it may make snow removal more challenging – for both you and your machine.

When you wait to remove snow, it can get out of control, build up and become more difficult for your snow blower to handle. As a general rule, you should start snow removal once it reaches six inches in height, and consider using a smaller snow thrower or basic shovel to clear lower snow heights. This prevents machines from having to work at maximum capacity to clear snowy driveways, saving components and helping to extend its life. You should also feed snow into the blowers in small amounts, which helps to avoid backups and jams from overpacking snow into auger components.

As you take small amounts of snow into your blower, you'll see farther throwing results. You want to throw snow as far away as possible to avoid having to re-throw snow as you continue on your driveway. Throwing snow far enough the first time means it should land in areas out of your driveway, meaning you won't have to go over them again.

When throwing snow, you always should change direction you shoot it in to allow for even snow distribution. For instance, you should adjust it after you finish every pass of your driveway (before switching directions to go back up), as well as when the wind changes direction. Many of our models feature cranks that rotate the chute, making it easy to change the throw angle. You should also be mindful of hazards, such as twigs, branches or gravel, as you use your machine.

How should I store my snow blower after winter ends?

Before storing your snow blower for the season, you should drain and remove the oil and gas fuel from gas-powered machines. This is to keep fuels from thickening and building up inside snow blower interiors. After draining the fuel, you should run your snow blower to clear out all that remains, as well as change your engine oil. For electric-powered options, be sure to check and recharge batteries before storing.

Whether you have a gas-powered or electric snow blower, you should still complete many general tasks to prepare it for storage. Clean and wipe down snow blower surfaces, using a damp cloth and mild soap to clear away salt and other debris that can corrode or damage the body or metal parts.

You should also clear out all moisture to avoid rusting, as well as inspect all parts for damages, replacing and repairing them as needed. Additionally, you should make sure all necessary parts are lubricated, including the augers, axle shafts and other interior components.

Finally, protect your investment through long-term storage using accessories, such as a cover, to prevent dust and dirt from building up. Before starting it up for the winter season, you should plan ahead, completing maintenance a few weeks before snow is in the forecast. So, instead of turning it on at the first snowfall and discovering it doesn't work, you can be prepared and ensure your snow blower is ready as soon as you need it to be.

Should I get a single-stage or two-stage snow blower?

If you're having trouble deciding between a single- and two-stage model, a good thing to note is that single-stage blowers are less likely to clog, and are better suited for small snow removal tasks, such as clearing light snow from smaller driveways and walkways. For larger snow clearing, go with a two- or three-stage snow blower, both of which have a wider clearance than single-stage options.

Getting Winter-Ready with Snow Blowers from Tractor Supply

When it comes to finding the right snow blower for your driveway and job, you can access abundant options at our store and online. Whether you're a commercial professional looking for ways to make snow removal quicker and more efficient, or a homeowner needing simple solutions, we have the choices you need to get the job done. To learn more about what we carry, visit your local Tractor Supply store today or browse online.