**Shoveling in the name of science!**

Zackery P. Quine; Eeva Latosuo  
*Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, AK, USA*

The fitness level of a single person rescuer is the most important factor that increases an avalanche victim’s survival. After examining 23 people for their experience with avalanche rescue and fitness level, findings showed having high levels of each helps lower shoveling time, but combined lower unburying time significantly. A 5,000 cc duffel bag buried more than one meter deep in a snow berm was unburied as fast as possible by a single person rescuer, across 2 levels of fines sans 3 levels of experience. A fitter person strategically shoveling raises the probability of survival by lowering the amount of time spent beneath the snow surface. Mortality rates from study 20 years ago found that survival probability rates at 15 minute are 92%. The decline rapidly to only 30% at 35 minutes (Falk, 1998). Because of the difficult snow conditions, shoveling is known to be the hardest part of companion rescue. In a one meter burial it’s estimated that 1,000 lbs of snow is moved (BCA video). This shows the importance of making sure your skills are where they need to be before going in avalanche terrain.