



Prevent Falls in Winter Weather

Preventing Falls... One Step at a Time

One of the biggest risks from wintry weather is falling, particularly among older adults. Icy conditions make it harder to stay on your feet, and the cold may cause us to limit our activity, which can lead to loss of strength and balance.

Bundle up to stay warm but make sure you can see in all directions and move easily and freely.

Wear sturdy shoes or boots with treads, even if you're just going out to get the newspaper. (Submitted by Cindy Hintz, via Facebook)

Do some light stretching before you venture out; it will make you physically more able to prevent a fall.

Carry a small bag of salt, sand or kitty litter in your pocket or purse to sprinkle in front of you for traction on icy paths.

Avoid walking on surfaces that may be icy if you can. If you can't, slow down, shorten your stride, walk with feet pointed out slightly and knees gently bent to improve traction and balance.

Snow can hide curbs and uneven surfaces. If you can't see where your foot will land, find another way.

Replace worn rubber tips on canes, walkers and crutches. Ask a mobility equipment dealer about winter canes or cleats you can add to existing equipment.

Dry off shoes, canes, crutches and walkers as soon as you get indoors. Wet shoes on dry surfaces are just as dangerous as dry shoes on wet surfaces.

If you are going out alone, carry a cell phone; know who you will call if you fall, and make sure that person knows what to do if you call.

Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration, which can affect your balance as well as how your body responds to medication.

Ask your doctor or physical therapist about indoor exercises that can help you maintain strength and balance when you can't venture out.

Wear sunglasses to reduce glare from the sun and snow and ensure that you can see where you are walking.

Carry a cleaning cloth and stop immediately to clean your glasses if they fog up going from outdoors to indoors.

Ask your post office, newspaper and garbage collector about service options that might make it safer for you when conditions are bad.

When in doubt, don't risk it. Ask for help if you don't feel safe doing something.



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