

During the winter months, many factors can cause a slip, fall or injury. Footwear, balance, distractions and environmental factors such as temperature or snowfall can all impact your safety.

Tip: Keep your doctor informed of your activity level. Some medications can increase your risk of falling.



Enjoy winter walking and be safe!

For more information on falls prevention, please call Southwestern Public Health at 1-800-922-0096

Developed by the Southwest Ontario Fall Prevention Network. May be reproduced for other winter walking fall prevention resources.



www.swpublichealth.ca

Winter Walking

Enjoy and be safe.



Physical activity throughout the year is a part of healthy aging and can help prevent falls and fractures. Walking is a great way to stay active!

Benefits of walking:

- Improves mental, social, and physical health; balance, posture and muscle strength
- Reduces the risk of heart disease, developing high blood pressure and diabetes, and improves bone health which reduces the risk of fractures from falls
- Provides an opportunity to spend time with friends and family



Before your walk

- Monitor the forecast and plan for the weather.
- Dress in layers in preparation for changing winter weather. Stay warm by wearing a hat, scarf and gloves.
- Wear bright colours so you can be seen.
- Wear something reflective at night.
- Choose warm, stable footwear – look for well-insulated and lightweight footwear with a non-slip tread sole.
- Consider a cane or walking poles, use ice grippers on footwear and assistive devices when outside.
- Consider carrying a baggie of sand or clean cat litter in your pocket. If you see ice, throw some sand or cat litter down for better grip.

During your walk

- Give time to let your eyes adjust when going from outdoors to indoors or vice versa.
- Be aware of your surroundings and scan for hazards. Black ice is often not visible.
- Watch for ice, cracks and uneven or changing surfaces.
- If you find yourself walking on ice, move slowly. Keep knees loose, shorten your strides and shuffle your feet. Wet leaves, rain and snow drifts can be as risky as ice.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets to stay balanced.
- Take extra care when stepping off the last step of stairs. Use the handrail when available for extra support.

After your walk

- Assess how you feel. If you are sore, switch to shorter walks and gradually increase your walking time.
- Drink water often. Dehydration can increase your risk of falling. It's important to stay hydrated, especially when you've done physical activity.



Top four tips for winter walking:

- 1 Wear reflective, warm clothing and non-slip footwear.
- 2 Tell someone where you are going before you leave.
- 3 Walk on clear paths.
- 4 Watch for hazards.