

Winter can be a challenging season for regular outdoor activities. Freezing rain, hard-packed snow and icy surfaces are often hazards for unsuspecting pedestrians. Just one bad fall can bring lasting consequences. Taking a few simple precautions can make outdoor activities safer this time of the year.



NS Department of Health and Wellness, and our provincial stakeholders, would like to remind you that most injuries can be prevented!

We encourage everyone to learn more about how to stay safe during winter months.

For more fall prevention information and resources for older adults, caregivers, and healthcare professionals, please visit www.FindingBalanceNS.ca

NOVA SCOTIA

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Be aware and take care.

SAFE WINTER WALKING



NOVA SCOTIA

Choose appropriate winter clothing and footwear.



It is important to wear several layers of warm lightweight clothing that allows you to move freely when walking.

Make sure that your head (especially your ears) and hands are also well covered. Remember to stay visible by wearing brightly colored and/or reflective clothing. The choice of a light weight, well insulated and waterproof boots with a thick, non-slip tread sole can improve your footing on slippery surfaces.



Consider using a walking aid.

Walking sticks, canes or a pair of ski poles can help you keep your balance during your walk. Make sure that you know how to use them properly and that they are the right height for you.

In order to increase traction, you can also use ice grippers on footwear or attach an ice pick at the end of a walking cane. However, such accessories can become dangerously slippery and must be removed before walking on smooth surfaces such as stone, tile and ceramic.

Be sure to wear your glasses and/or hearing aids if you need them. While seeing the environment is important, you also want to be sure you can hear approaching traffic and different warning signals.

Walk like a penguin!

The penguin is one animal that has mastered the winter walk. Follow their lead to learn how to avoid a fall and possible injuries when walking on icy surfaces:



- Point your feet out slightly
- Keep your knees relaxed and walk flat-footed
- Take shorter, shuffle-like steps
- Keep your arms out and your hands free
- Concentrate on keeping your balance and... **GO SLOWLY!**

Beware of black ice.

It is very possible that a thin sheet of transparent ice or “black ice” is covering your pathway even when walking surfaces do not look especially icy or slippery. This type of ice can be especially difficult to see in darkness and other poor visibility conditions. When approaching an area that appears to be covered with ice or snow, always use extreme caution.

Consider carrying a small bag of grit, sand or non-clumping cat litter in your jacket pocket or handbag, to sprinkle when you are confronted with icy sidewalks, parking lots, stairs or other areas.



Support yourself adequately.

Be careful when climbing stairs by making sure that you use the handrail. Take extra care when entering or exiting vehicles by bracing yourself with the vehicle door and seat back in order to give you some stability. Avoid taking unnecessary risks, like climbing over snow banks.

REMEMBER... GO SLOWLY

SLOW DOWN, TAKE YOUR TIME AND CONCENTRATE ON KEEPING YOUR BALANCE.