



Prevent falls in winter weather

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.

Here are some tips to help prevent falls:

- Wrap 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.
- Do some light stretching before you venture out; it will make you physically more able to prevent a fall.
- 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 grip 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 ferrules on walking sticks, walking frames and crutches but remember that brakes on wheeled walkers may not be as effective on icy pavements so avoid unsalted ramps and slopes.
- Dry off shoes, sticks, crutches and walking frames as soon as you get indoors. Wet shoes on dry surfaces are just as dangerous as dry shoes on wet surfaces.
- Carry a cleaning cloth and stop immediately to clean your glasses if they fog up going from outdoors to indoors.
- Ask shops and your local council about options that might make it safer for you when conditions are bad e.g. delivering to your home or collecting the bin from beside your house instead of the end of your drive
- When in doubt, don't risk it. Ask for help if you don't feel safe doing something.