

Benefits of walking:

- Improves mental, social, and physical health; balance, posture, and muscle strength.
- A good way to spend time with others.
- Reduces the risk of heart disease, developing high blood pressure, diabetes, and improves bone health to reduce the risk of fractures from falls.



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



During the winter months, many factors can cause a slip, fall, or injury like a fracture.

Many things can impact your safety while you walk, including footwear, balance, distractions, and environmental factors such as temperature and snowfall.

Keep your doctor informed of your physical activity level. Medication could increase your risk of falling.



Grey Bruce
Public Health

Winter Walking.

ENJOY & BE SAFE.



Before walking:

- Monitor the forecast and plan ahead.
- Dress in layers so you are prepared for the 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.
- Also consider carrying a baggy of sand or kitty-litter in your pocket. If you see ice, throw some sand down for better grip.

During your walk:

- Give time to let your eyes adjust when going from outdoors to indoors and vice versa.
- Be aware of your surroundings and scan for hazards. Black ice is often not visible to the eye.



- 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.

- Watch for ice cracks, and uneven or changing surfaces
- Keep your hands out of your pockets to help stay balanced.
- Take extra care when stepping off the last step of stairs. Use the hand rail 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 tips for Winter Walking:

- Wear reflective, warm clothing and non-slip footwear.
- Tell someone before you leave.
- Walk on clear paths and watch for hazards.

Developed by Southwest Ontario Regional Fall Prevention Network and adapted by Grey Bruce Public Health.



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