



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 long-term consequences. Taking a few simple precautions can make outdoor activities safer this time of the year.



The NB Trauma Program, and our provincial stakeholders, would like to remind you that most falls can be prevented!

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

For more information on winter safety and other injury prevention topics, for people of all ages, please visit www.NBTrauma.ca.



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Be aware and take care.

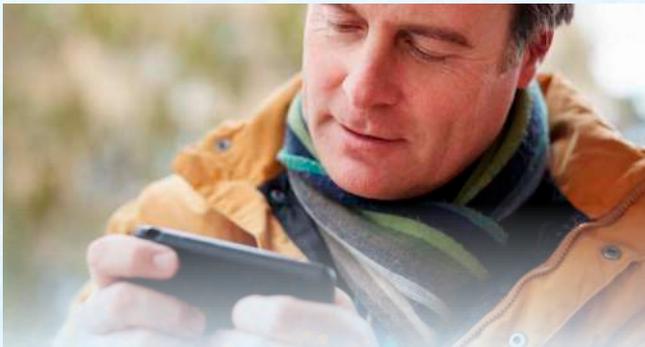
SAFE WINTER WALKING





Try to avoid carrying heavy loads

Heavy items such as large boxes, backpacks or purses may cause you to lose your balance while walking on icy surfaces or hinder your view of obstacles.



Avoid texting or using noise-cancelling headphones

Electronic device use while walking may distract and/or prevent you from seeing potential hazards along your way or from hearing oncoming traffic or snow removal equipment.

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.



AVOID WINTER FALLS

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!**

IN AREAS WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE, PUTTING SALT OR SAND ON THE GROUND AFTER THE REMOVAL OF ICE AND SNOW IS A GREAT WAY TO INCREASE TRACTION AND REDUCE POSSIBLE INJURIES.

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.



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.

Be careful on frozen water bodies

Do not walk (or skate) on an icy pond, lake or any other water body if the ice thickness is less than 10cm (4 inches). Always test the thickness of the ice before venturing out and check to see if you can find any cracks, breaks, weak spots or abnormal surfaces. The color of the ice may also be an indication of its strength:



Blue to clear ice is strongest due to its high density.



White to opaque ice is half as strong as blue ice because it's porous from air pockets.



Light grey to dark black ice is unsafe as it indicates the presence of melting ice.

IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT GO ONTO THE ICE