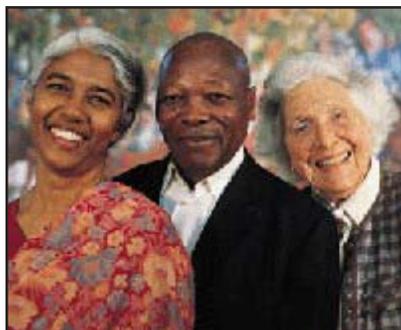


Stepping Out RI



January 2010
Volume 1, Issue 4

RI Injury Community Planning Group/Falls Injury Prevention Subcommittee



Safety Tips for Winter Walking

Walking during the winter requires special attention to avoid slipping and falling, which can

cause serious injuries.

As winter approaches, outfit yourself for safe walking. Choose a good pair of winter boots. For warmth and stability look for boots that are well insulated and waterproof, with thick, non-slip tread soles and wide, low heels, and that are light in weight.

• Ice grippers on footwear can help you walk on hard packed snow and ice. But be careful! Grippers become dangerously slippery and must be removed before walking on smooth surfaces such as stone, tile and ceramic. Before buying the grippers, be sure that you are able to attach and remove them from your boots.

- Use a cane to help with balance. Have it fitted to the right height for you. When your cane is held upside down, the end should be at wrist level. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist about how to use your cane properly.
- Attach an ice pick at the end of your

to help protect the hips against fractures and give added confidence.

Once snow and ice arrive, make sure your walking surfaces are safe.

- Keep entrance ways and sidewalks clear of ice and snow. Report hazards on sidewalks or pathways to your

In This Issue:

Safety Tips for Winter Walking

Tips to Have a Safe Landing - If You Fall

Choose Safe Footwear for All Seasons



Facility Flier of the Month: - Be Safe on Ice, Do the Penguin Shuffle

About Our Organization

Did You Know...The same things that lead to falling also lead to motor vehicle crashes, such as medication errors. Electronic prescriptions can decrease medication errors. (More coming in next issue!)

cane. Cane picks will be slippery on hard surfaces so be sure to flip it back as you get indoors. Picks are available at most drug stores.

- If you need further support use a walker. The cost can be covered by government programs; talk with your doctor.
- Wear a hip protector (a lightweight belt or pant with hip shields)

landlord or the city.

- Contact your local home support agency or other community services for help with snow removal, transportation, and grocery services.
- Carry 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, steps, etc.

[Continued on page 2]

Tips to Have a Safe Landing... If You Fall



- Wear a heavy, bulky coat that will cushion you if you should fall.
- Try to avoid landing on your knees, wrists, or spine. Try to fall on a fleshy part of your body, such as your side.
- Try to relax your muscles if you fall. You'll injure yourself less if you are relaxed.

[Continued from page 1]

- Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.

In cold temperatures, approach with caution and assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy. Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking short cuts over snow piles and other frozen areas can be hazardous.

What should you do if it's impossible to avoid an icy patch? Believe it or not, body movements can increase your stability on an icy surface.

- First, slow down and think about your next move. Keeping your body

as loose as possible, spread your feet to more than a foot apart to provide a base of support. This will help stabilize you as you walk.

- Next, keep your knees loose and don't let them lock. If you can, let them bend a bit. This will keep your center of gravity lower to the ground, which further stabilizes the body.

- Now you are ready to take a step. Make the step small, placing your whole foot down at once. Then shift your weight very slowly to this foot and bring your other foot to meet it the same way. Keep a wide base of support.

Some people prefer to drag their feet or shuffle them. If this feels better to you, then do so. Just remember to place your whole foot on the ice at once and keep your base of support approximately one foot wide.

If you are not confident, don't be reluctant to ask a passer-by to help you cross the icy surface.

Sources: Ottawa Public Health
http://ottawa.ca/residents/health/living/injury_prevention/senior_safety/active_en.html
Niagara Region Public Health
<http://www.regional.niagara.on.ca/living/seniors/default.aspx>
Safety Canada (October 2006)
<http://www.safety-council.org/news/sc/2006/October.html>

Choose Safe Foot Wear for All Seasons

-Wear rubber soled, low heeled shoes that fully support your feet.

-Avoid shoes with soft soles. Shoes with soft soles and interiors, such as athletic shoes, may provide too much "sway" and may not promote good balance.



-Choose "high-collar" shoes if possible.

-Avoid high heels over one inch.



-Avoid typical house slippers, especially flip-flop types or those without heel support.

-Wearing only socks, or shoes with smooth soles, on stairs or waxed floors is unsafe.

-Shop for shoes late in the day when your feet may be larger due to swelling.



Be Safe on Ice, Do the Penguin Shuffle

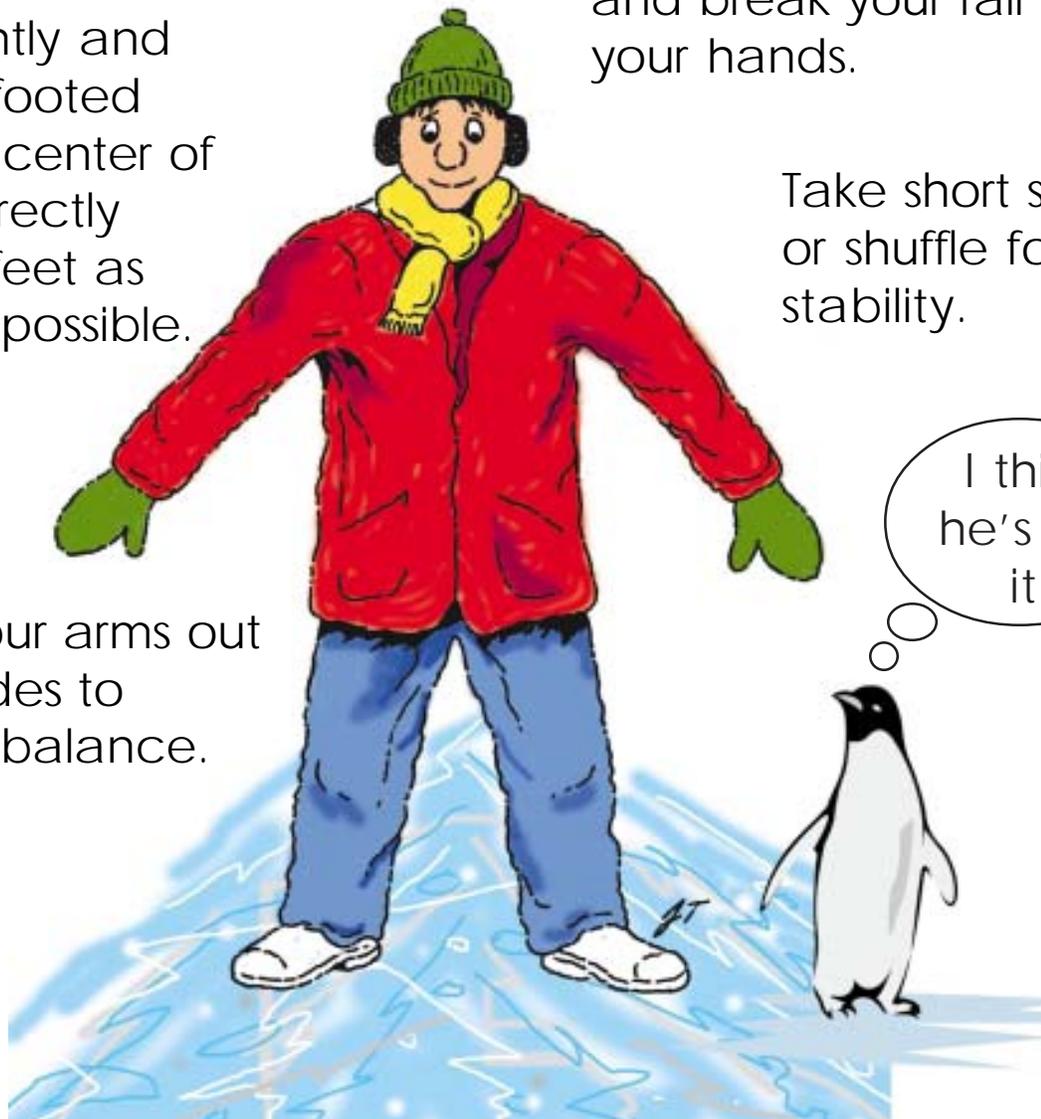
Point your feet out slightly like a penguin.

Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.

Extend your arms out to your sides to maintain balance.

Keep your hands out of your pockets to improve your balance and break your fall with your hands.

Take short steps or shuffle for stability.



**Watch where you are stepping,
and Go SLOWLY!**



Rhode Island Department of Health
Safe Rhode Island
3 Capitol Hill Room 409
Providence RI 02908



Stepping Out RI



January 2010
Volume 1, Issue 4

RI Injury Community Planning Group/Falls Injury Prevention Subcommittee

About Our Organization

The Rhode Island Falls Injury Prevention Subcommittee is a member of the Department of Health's Injury Community Planning Group. The committee's goal is to reduce the risk of falls and resulting injuries that keep older adults (65-85+) from living in the community. Our priority is to promote physical activity as a protective factor to prevent falls. Visit our website at:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/disease/saferi/index.php>

or call Beatriz Perez at 222-7627 for more information.

This newsletter is sponsored by Safe Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Department of Health, the University of Rhode Island College of Nursing, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Rhode Island. The newsletter is produced by the Rhode Island Injury Community Planning Group/Falls Injury Prevention Subcommittee.

TIP: If you fall, CALL – let someone know.