

Winterize to Prevent Falls



Below are five simple steps that YOU can take today to reduce falls among older adults and adults with disabilities in your community.

1

Raise awareness

Post and share this simple and colorful infographic—[6 Steps to Prevent a Fall](#)—from the National Council on Aging.

2

“Winterize” shoes, boots, and assistive devices

- Attach spikeless ice and snow shoe gripper sole covers to shoes for extra stability when walking on slippery surfaces. Look for these at sporting goods stores.
- Attach an ice gripper cane tip that has spikes on the bottom to penetrate the ice and secure a firm grip. Ice grip tips can be purchased online.
- Choose winter shoes with rubber soles to maintain traction on slippery surfaces.
- Try this inexpensive way to make [wheelchair snow tires](#).

3

Carry kitty litter for slick surfaces

Encourage older adults to [carry a zip top bag filled with a lightweight kitty litter](#) in their pocket and cast it out ahead of themselves on slick surfaces.

4

Screen older adults for fall risk

Health care providers: begin to check ALL older adults with the STEADI fall risk screening tool as part of your normal intake and reevaluation process. Learn more about administering the [STEADI screen](#) and using [evidence-based falls prevention programs](#) in your community.

5

Give the gift of falls prevention

Encourage adult children to give fall-proofing gifts to their parents:

- Fall alarm systems that are motion triggered without hitting a button
- Higher toilets in the home
- Replace multifocal glasses with single vision eyeglass lenses
- Grab bars in bathroom and next to outside steps or inside thresholds
- Install firm stair railings on both sides of stairways and set automatic lights over stairways and by outside entrances
- Cover the entryway to the home and provide a table to set down bags while finding keys
- Shorter days mean more time in the dark—give tiny flashlights to attach to keys, hats, and coat buttons

Help make this season a safe, warm, and wonderful one for your patients, family, and community!

Source: Mindy Oxman Renfro, PT, PhD, DPT; Chair, American Physical Therapy Association’s AGPT Balance & Falls SIG; Lead, Montana’s Falls Free Coalition; University of Montana Rural Institute/MonTECH programs.