

Ice ready tips

With the temperatures hitting some icy lows, perfect your 'ice walk' this winter with top tips from Durham House.

Snowy and icy roads and pavements mean potentially hazardous conditions underfoot and a rise in injuries caused by slips and falls. It is quite natural, therefore, for us to be wary when walking outdoors and adopting our 'ice walk'; the problem is that an unnatural walking posture could cause as many problems as the icy conditions themselves.

Best foot forward

It is a good idea to have two pairs of shoes, one for walking in the ice and snow, the other for indoors or whilst driving.

Waterproof or other, lined shoes are preferable as are thermal socks, as these items will help keep your feet warm. Cold, numb feet are less able to sense and adapt to changing conditions.

Footwear should have a solid and large, raised treads on the sole; essential for maximising your grip on the ice.

Shoes with support features are important - walking shoes with a firm ankle support are ideal as they help prevent you 'going over' on your ankle and help you feel more stable in slippery conditions. If shoes have laces, they should be firmly laced to give a close fit without limiting the circulation.

What to avoid....Wellingtons can be practical, but they often don't give enough support and can be difficult to take off. Also avoid walking outside in leather or other, smooth soled shoes.

Top Gear

Clothing should be warm and allow you to move freely. Anything that impedes you from walking 'normally' could make you more prone to falling over or lead to you walking in an unnatural way.

Be Prepared

There are things you can do to prepare yourself for better balance. Standing on one leg, as an exercise, is a great way to help improve your balance.

When you are out and about, keeping your hands out of your pockets (use gloves) so that you can use your arms for better balance is a great idea too.

Watch out for parts of the pavement that may have been in shadow or under trees, where there is more likely be black ice, but make sure you pay attention to what is ahead too!

Falling Gracefully

If you do fall, try and curl up and 'roll' with the fall and stay relaxed, this will minimise any jarring to your body. Whilst it may be an automatic reaction, try to avoid putting your hands out to save you - this may cause wrist injuries.

Keep Your Wits

Try to avoid alcohol. Not only will you be more prone to feeling the adverse effects of the cold (because alcohol causes loss of body heat) but it may also cause you to take risks that you wouldn't normally do and, of course, make you more unsteady on your feet. Keep topped up with warm drinks to keep your temperature up.

