



Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

Approximately 9 million slip, trip and fall injuries are treated in emergency rooms annually in the United States.

Deaths from falls have increased steadily over the past 20 years and will continue to trend upward as our population ages.

Slips, trips and falls are the second-leading cause of workplace injuries resulting in lost work days.



Help prevent injuries by learning the common causes of slips, trips and falls and using the following tips.

Obstacles and Uneven Walking Surfaces

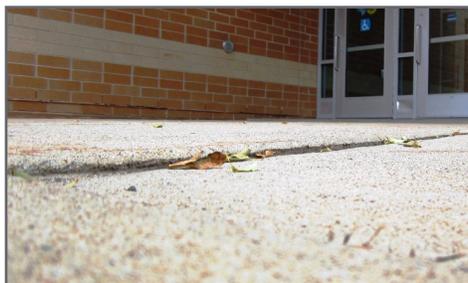


Raised or sunken sidewalk sections are often difficult to notice and can easily cause a person to stumble and fall.

Low-lying objects along walkways are often unnoticed, especially when they're near doorways or other areas with visual distractions. Even when these objects are noticed, tripping is still possible due to rushing, poor depth perception, or impaired feeling or sensation in feet.



Blind corners or visual distractions increase the risk of a fall.



Cracked and uneven sidewalks are a major contributor to trip and fall accidents. A ¼-inch change in elevation between sidewalk sections is enough to cause a trip.

Mats may have several potential fall hazards, including curled edges, buckling, holes and backings that are not slip resistant.



TIPS FOR PREVENTION

1. Stay on walkways. Don't take shortcuts through unpaved areas.
2. Look ahead at the walkway for hazards—approximately 10-15 feet. Do this even when walking in a familiar area.
3. Slow down when approaching obstacles and visible hazards. Be on high alert when construction or maintenance activities are underway.
4. Make a deliberate effort to avoid or step over any objects, cracks and raised edges in walkways. Assume they are taller than they appear.
5. Look down for low-lying objects when turning or moving away from a corner.
6. Be aware of distractions, and don't lose focus on the task of walking.

Footwear Issues

Worn out, inappropriate or improperly fitting footwear is responsible for about 25% of slip and fall accidents.

Oversized shoes allow the foot to slide and lose contact inside the shoe. This increases the risk of heels catching the edge of a stair tread and reduces the ability to regain control if the shoe slides on a slick surface.

TIPS FOR PREVENTION

1. Buy shoes with slip-resistant soles and avoid raised heels.
2. Avoid sandals, flip-flops and shoes with open backs (clogs).
3. Buy shoes that fit snugly; keep a shoehorn handy if needed.
4. Inspect soles and heels frequently.
5. Wear appropriate footwear for the expected walkway conditions.

Flat-soled shoes help reduce slips and falls by maximizing the surface area in contact with the floor and minimizing the risk of catching or tripping on a stair tread. For example, shoes with a two-inch raised heel reduce contact with the floor by 40%.

For snowy conditions, shoes or boots with hard rubber soles and deep cleats are appropriate. However, they do not perform as well indoors.

Slip-resistant shoes for wet or oily surfaces feature a multidirectional tread pattern to minimize hydroplaning and a softer rubber sole to help grip hard-surfaced floors.



Most people walk heel first, so make sure to check heels for signs of wear. Badly worn heels are particularly risky. As the heel material wears away, a hard, smooth surface (often plastic or wood) is exposed and becomes the first point of contact with the floor.



Stairs and Steps

A missed step on a stairway can cause a fall resulting in serious injury. Typical reasons include:

- Distractions
- Poor lighting or glare
- Rushing
- Shoes with raised heels
- Carrying heavy or bulky items
- Not using handrails



Wet/Slippery Surfaces

TIPS FOR PREVENTION

1. Always look ahead for spills, puddles and ice patches.
2. Slow down when approaching wet areas on walkways. Make wide turns at corners.
3. Treat any wet surfaces as though they are ice covered—slow down and “ice walk.” (Use shorter steps, keep your head up and shoulders back, and walk flat-footed.)
4. Don't assume mats by doorways absorb all water that's been tracked in. Even if the floor appears dry, your outsoles may be wet and can cause you to slip.
5. Keep both hands free to steady yourself when entering or exiting vehicles during wet or snowy conditions.



Typically, concrete or asphalt sidewalks are not slippery when wet, but areas that are painted may be slippery. Treat any wet painted areas as if they are slippery.

During winter months, beware of black ice that can form after the sun goes down, even if temperatures are well above freezing.



Distracted Walking

Even though we do it every day, we should stay focused when walking because distractions can increase the risk of falling. Typical distractions include other people, emergency vehicles, mobile phones/devices or conversations with others.

TIPS FOR PREVENTION

1. Treat walking like driving—give it your full, undivided attention.
2. Stop when you talk, text or read on your mobile device.
3. Be aware of your surroundings.
4. Look ahead for potential hazards.
5. Slow down in hazardous conditions.



Learn More

To access online resources that can help prevent slips and falls, go to www.emcins.com and select **Loss Control**.

