

As winter storm targets eastern U.S., tips for stepping out safely

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(HealthDay)—With much of the eastern United States bracing for a

major winter storm this weekend, one expert is offering advice on how to lower your risk of slipping or falling on ice or snow once you head outside.

Wear boots or shoes that provide good traction; those made of nonslip rubber or neoprene with grooved sole are best. Don't wear shoes or boots with smooth soles or heels, said Julia Henderson-Kalb, an instructor in the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at Saint Louis University, in Missouri.

Look ahead when you walk, try to stay on the grassy edge of snow- or ice-covered sidewalks or driveways, and use hand railings when going up and down steps, she advised. Extending your arms out to your sides can help your balance.

In cold weather, any wet, dark areas on the pavement can be slippery. "Some spots can be nearly invisible layers of ice even if they just look wet," Henderson-Kalb said in a university news release.

When there is snow or ice on the ground, bend slightly and walk flat-footed.

"Put your center of gravity directly over your feet as much as possible. Take short steps or shuffle. It also helps to stop occasionally to break momentum," Henderson-Kalb said.

Take your time when walking and factor that into your plans.

"Allowing more time lets you focus on safety and to be aware of the surroundings, both of which are important to avoid falling in winter weather," Henderson-Kalb said. "Walking more slowly will also help your reaction time to changes in traction."

She added that wearing sunglasses during the day can help you see better and avoid hazards in your path. But make sure your glasses don't block your vision.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [winter outdoor safety](#).

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