

Safe Walking Tips

We all know that winters in the Washington, DC area can coat our sidewalks with everything from sleet and ice to snow and whatever you call that nasty gray slush churned up by cars and plows. We also know that area pedestrians need to get where they're going regardless of the conditions. So whether you're walking for exercise or to reach your destination, here are a few winter walking tips to heed.



Consider the conditions

when planning your route. Walk where trees offer some shelter from the wind. In nasty weather, try a shopping mall, where you can walk—and window shop—without abandoning your walking regimen.



Wear bright or reflective clothing

and stay visible. With fewer daylight hours and cloudy conditions, it's important to put on a high-visibility outer layer.



Cover your head and other parts to stay warm.

Dress in layers, and don't forget the mittens or gloves and hat — you lose 35 percent of your body heat through your head!



Share the way.

Be mindful of cyclists, runners, and other trail users. Walk on the right, and listen for bells and audible warnings. Watch for icy spots!



Pay extra attention to your feet.

Wear warm socks with room for toe wiggling. Lace up walking shoes with plenty of traction for those occasional icy patches.



Walk with friends

or in places where there are other walkers, especially in the early morning and evening hours on shorter winter days and when weather conditions are unfavorable.



Be safe and be seen.

Follow basic safety rules, like looking both ways before you cross a street, crossing at marked crosswalks, and walking to the right on trails and paths. Assume drivers can't see you and proceed with caution.



Start slowly

and take it easy. Muscles warm up as you go. Adjust your pace for the weather conditions to decrease your chances of straining a muscle or taking a fall.