

WINTERIZE! Balance and Falls SIG Shares Ideas!

As winter approaches, the risk of falls to you, your families and your patients/clients grows. Please help us to be proactive to prevent that first fall! **Here are five simple steps that YOU can take today to make a big impact on falls for older adults in your area:**

1. Raise awareness through posting and dissemination of this simple and colorful infographic from the National Council on Aging, which can be downloaded here <http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/falls-prevention/take-control-of-your-health.html>
2. Check shoes, boots, and assistive devices and be sure that they are “winterized”.
 - a. Ingrid – Ice Gripper Cane Tip is available here http://www.fashionablecanes.com/Ice_Attachment.html and also can be found here <http://cozywinters.com/shop/cane-ice-grip-spike.html>
 - b. Yaktrax Spikeless Ice & Snow Shoe Gripper Sole Covers are available here http://www.fashionablecanes.com/Ice_Attachment.html
 - c. Keen shoes can be found here http://www.onlineshoes.com/keen-b_id38?adtrack=msns&term=keens&creative=3782574466&device=c&matchtype=b
 - d. Here’s a cheap way to make wheelchair snow tires <http://www.usatechguide.org/blog/wheelchair-improve-traction/>
3. **Encourage elders to carry a Ziploc bag filled with a lightweight kitty litter in their pocket** and cast it out ahead of themselves on very slick surfaces. Print this handout here http://www.ehow.com/info_12021617_kitty-litter-make-ice-less-slippery.html
4. Tis the season for gift giving, encourage adult children to give fall-proofing holiday gifts to their parents:
 - a. Higher toilets in the home
 - b. Grab bars in bathroom and by outside steps or inside thresholds
 - c. Install firm stair railings on both sides of stair ways and set automatic lights over stairways and by outside entrances
 - d. Cover the entryway to the home and provide a table to set down bags while finding keys.
 - e. Give tiny flashlights to attach to keys, hats, and coat buttons. Shorter days mean more time in the dark.
5. Begin to check ALL older adults with the STEADI fall risk screening tool as part of your normal intake and reevaluation process. You can learn to administer the STEADI here www.cdc.gov/injury/steady and you can learn how to use the Otago Fall Prevention program as part of your PT program here <http://www.med.unc.edu/aging/cgec/exercise-program>