

Winters in New England Can Be Challenging

Many of us have chosen to live in New England because of the beauty that each season brings. After the transition of the peaceful autumn foliage, however, we must brace ourselves for the onslaught of winter. Frigid temperatures, icy roads and sidewalks, and mountains of snow pose challenges as we attempt to maintain our health and avoid injury. Some easy-to-remember winter safety tips will help.

Dress appropriately for the temperature. Dress in layers and wear gloves, hats, and warm socks to help maintain a safe body core and extremity temperature. A cold or tingling sensation of the hands, feet, or tip of the nose signals that you have been out in the cold too long and that it is time to seek warmer temperatures.

When outdoors on pavement in the winter, expect a surface to be slippery if it looks like it's wet. Walk with shorter strides and bend your knees more than usual. Keep your body weight over top of your knees. This will minimize the risk of your feet slipping out from under you, which can lead to a fall and potential injury.

Snow removal always presents a challenge. Use a modern shovel designed to protect the spine. We tend to throw snow to one side when shoveling. That repetitive motion can lead to a back or shoulder strain. When throwing the snow, alternate throwing it to the right and left side instead. Use your strong legs and buttocks muscles to squat down to lift the shovel full of snow rather than bending at the waist and using your weaker low back muscles.

These simple tips will help you to stay healthy and free from injuries this winter.