

## 10 Winter Safety Tips for Wheelchairs and Walkers

Navigating ice and snow can be a challenge, and using a wheelchair or a walker adds a new layer of difficulty. But don't shut yourself away. Here are 10 tips to help you stay safe when you venture out.

### 1. Be Sure Your Equipment is Winter-Ready

Give your mobility device a good cleaning before bad weather sets in. This gives you a chance to assess its current condition and make any repairs or adjustments so you'll have good control in winter weather.

### 2. Perform Routine Maintenance

Be sure to check the condition of your wheels and brakes, and consider covering your handles with something to protect hands from the cold metal.

### 3. Clear the Way

To avoid slipping, have someone clear snow and ice from your ramp, sidewalks, and driveway.

### 4. Is Your Ramp Winter-Ready?

If your ramp isn't made of a slip-resistant material, add some non-slip tape for better traction.

### 5. Dress the Part

Wear sturdy shoes, and dress in layers so that you can remove clothing when you're hot, and add clothing when you start to feel cold. **TIP:** Be extra careful to cover any parts of your body which have impaired sensation.

### 6. Walk This Way

Though sneakers are comfy in nice weather, the added traction from sturdy shoes or proper snow boots will help keep you stay stable and safe.

### 7. Don't Forget Your Helper

Remind your helper to dress appropriately, too, so they don't slip and fall while helping you.

### 8. Light it Up

It gets dark earlier in winter, so make sure you can see—and *be* seen. Clip-on flashlights, reflectors and dressing in lighter colors can help, or wear a high-visibility vest like those workers at the side of the road.

### 9. Keep your "wheels" warm

When you are not using your device, store it inside rather than in an unheated garage, carport, or shed. Freezing temperatures can harm batteries.

### 10. Stay Smart and Safe

Always use your best judgment about when to venture out. If you do go out alone, use the "buddy system" and let someone know where you're going and what route you'll be taking. Then call or text when you're safely home.

*We are passionate about helping people interact with their world with as much confidence and independence as possible. If there is anything we can do to help you, or someone you care for, give us a call: 816-347-2738*