



[Preventing Injury Causing Slip-And-Fall Accidents](#)

by [John Demas](#) on 02/18/09 at 8:31 pm

Americans of all ages are at risk for debilitating falls, especially young children and adults age 65 and older. According to Safe Kids USA, “[children suffer] more than 2.3 million fall-related injuries” each year and “approximately 103 children die” annually from those injuries. [Click here for more](#). Stated differently, “Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injury for all children ages 14 years and under.” [Learn more about safe kids](#).

Adults over age 65 also experience their share of falls annually. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Every 18 seconds, an older adult is treated in an emergency department for a fall, and every 35 minutes someone in this population dies as a result of their injuries.” [Read More](#)

Since many slip-and-fall [or “falling”] accidents are preventable, we can each take proactive steps to ensure our own safety. We cannot just rely on busy employers, groundskeepers and storekeepers to constantly survey their property, looking for unsafe conditions.

The following list of precautionary tips should help protect all of us from unwanted slips and falls:

- Only walk where there is adequate lighting. Don’t be afraid to politely ask the person in charge of the premises to provide you with proper lighting — if the area you’d like to enter appears to be too dark.
- Make sure you’re wearing shoes with a non-slick sole that can provide you with proper traction on most floor surfaces. Although tennis shoes aren’t proper attire in many settings, think about the floor grip they offer when trying to buy a safe pair of shoes.
- Never carry so many items that you cannot easily look down and see what type of floor surface is below you — or just ahead.
- Ask a co-worker or friend to steady any ladder you climb. It’s just too easy to gain a sense of false confidence on a ladder, only to have it slip out from underneath you as you shift your weight on it.

- Never work so many shifts that you become too drowsy to easily maintain your balance while walking or performing other tasks. Likewise, never trust your footing after drinking or taking powerful prescription medications.
- When walking outside or in unknown areas, frequently check the street or ground surface to be sure it's level. Gravel, pot holes and other surface problems can cause you to suddenly stumble and fall.
- When ice or other challenging weather conditions exist, avoid going out if you can wait until better weather returns. If you must venture out, wear shoes with soles specifically designed for such weather.
- Keep in mind that grocery stores often harbor rather slick floor surfaces. Always look where you're going and carefully walk around any orange cones or other markers indicating there's a wet floor or spill.
- If you're 65 or older and already have a tendency to fall, seek out special physical rehabilitative care that can help you maintain better balance. Ask your doctor if you need a cane or other medical device to help you walk in a steady fashion.
- If you have a chronic health condition, be aware that you may be at greater risk for a fall than the rest of the population – regardless of your age. Speak with your doctor about any resources that may increase your strength, balance and overall stability.

If we each keep all of these tips in mind, we should be able to greatly lessen the chances of falling and injuring ourselves.

Surely there are steps we all can take to better protect ourselves so that these numbers will drop dramatically.