

STEPPING SAFELY OUTDOORS: SPRING SAFETY IN FLORIDA

MANATEE COUNTY
Falls Prevention
COALITION

As spring arrives, many of us are spending more time outdoors enjoying the sunshine, fresh air, and activities we love. However, changes in environment and routine can increase the risk of falls, especially for older adults.



This month, we're focusing on how to stay safe while staying active outdoors in Florida.

Safe Walking in Florida Conditions

Spring is the perfect time to get outside, but outdoor surfaces can be unpredictable.

Key Tips:

- Stay alert for uneven sidewalks, cracks, and tree roots
- Be cautious of sand, gravel, and wet leaves on walking paths
- Watch for slick surfaces after rain, especially where algae may grow
- Cross streets carefully and allow extra time at intersections



Reminder: Even familiar walking routes can change with weather and seasonal conditions.

Hydration & Heat Awareness

Florida heat can sneak up quickly, even in spring, and dehydration is a major contributor to dizziness and falls.

Protect Yourself:

- Drink water before, during, and after outdoor activity
- Take breaks in the shade or indoors
- Wear lightweight, breathable clothing
- Know the signs of dehydration: dizziness, fatigue, confusion



Important: If you feel lightheaded, sit down immediately and hydrate.



Spring Footwear Matters

Warmer weather often means switching footwear, but not all shoes are falls prevention-friendly.

Choose Wisely:

- Wear supportive, well-fitting shoes with non-slip soles
- Avoid flip-flops, loose sandals, or worn-out shoes
- Ensure proper traction, especially on wet or sandy surfaces



Rule of Thumb: If the shoe doesn't stay securely on your foot, it's not safe for walking.

Pet & Outdoor Distractions

Pets and outdoor environments can be unpredictable and increase fall risk.

Be Mindful Of:

- Dogs pulling suddenly on leashes
- Distractions like wildlife or other people
- Changes in terrain when not paying attention



Tip: Use a secure leash and maintain good awareness of your surroundings.

Beach & Boardwalk Safety

Living in Florida means enjoying beautiful beaches, but they come with unique risks!

Stay Safe at the Beach:

- Walk carefully on uneven or shifting sand
- Use stable beach chairs for support when sitting and standing
- Be cautious on wet boardwalks or docks, which can be slippery



Take your time! Rushing on sand or wet surfaces increases fall risk.

Move for Safety: Simple Exercises to Prevent Falls

Improving strength and balance is one of the best ways to prevent falls. Try incorporating these simple exercises into your routine!



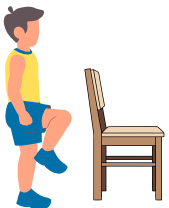
1. Sit-to-Stand: Builds leg strength for safer movement

- Sit in a sturdy chair and stand up without using your hands if possible
- Slowly sit back down
- Repeat 10–15 times



2. Heel-to-Toe Walk: Improves balance and coordination

- Walk in a straight line placing one foot directly in front of the other
- Use a wall or counter for support if needed



3. Single Leg Stand: Strengthens stabilizing muscles

- Hold onto a chair or counter
- Lift one foot and hold for 10–15 seconds
- Switch legs



4. Marching in Place: Enhances balance and mobility

- Stand tall and slowly lift knees one at a time
- Continue for 30–60 seconds



5. Gentle Stretching: Improves flexibility and reduces stiffness

- Stretch calves, hamstrings, and hips daily
- Hold each stretch for 15–30 seconds

Stay Active, Stay Safe

Spring is a wonderful time to get outdoors and enjoy all that Florida has to offer. By taking simple precautions and staying mindful, you can reduce your risk of falls while staying active and independent.

Stay connected by checking out our website!

www.themanateeountyfallspreventioncoalition.org