

Yaktrax® Walkers for Snowy and Icy Conditions

The Yaktrax® walker is one brand of a simple walking device that improves stability and reduces falls in hazardous winter conditions. Yaktrax® stretch to fit over your regular shoes, are lightweight and inexpensive (they cost \$20–\$30), and are available at most sporting goods stores. They have a coil design that increases traction for walking over packed snow or ice, helping to prevent slipping. They weigh only 5.5 ounces and have no sharp edges, so it's easy to keep them in a purse, pocket, or glove compartment. Yaktrax® won't damage most floors, but you shouldn't wear them indoors!

No product can guarantee that you won't fall, but a study conducted in Wisconsin at the Marshfield Clinic and published by the American Geriatrics Society in June 2005 confirmed that the Yaktrax® walker can reduce outdoor winter falls and help to keep older adults safer on ice and snow. For questions regarding this product, call 1-866-YAKTRAX or visit the company's website, www.yaktrax.com to find a local retailer.



There are a number of kinds of snow and ice walkers (sometimes called ice cleats) that fit over regular shoes or boots. Some of these feature the coil and netting design, some use tough beads on a wire to provide traction, some use a strong plastic overshoe to give traction (such as STABILicers Lite[®] or MonsterGrips[®]). The coil and netting design (Yaktrax[®]) is the type that has been researched and found to be effective, and therefore is the style that is recommended.

Search the Internet or the website “Cozy Winters” at <http://cozywinters.com/ice-cleats/ice-cleats.html>.

Winter Mobility Tips

1. Have good traction on your shoes.
2. Keep walking paths clear of snow and ice.
3. If snow or ice cannot be removed from a particular area, spread salt or sand to improve traction.
4. Consider getting an ice tip for your cane.
5. In the winter, walk as though snow and ice are present. Ice may not always be visible.
6. Take slower and smaller steps and understand that activities such as crossing streets will take longer.
7. Wear bright-colored clothing so that you can be seen easily.

Keeping Safe Outdoors

Remember!

On the Stairs or Curb:

1. Step up first with your stronger leg.
2. Step down first with your weaker leg.
3. Walk with your legs wider apart to make ramps and slopes easier.
4. On stairs, fold your walker and use the railing. If possible, have someone else carry your walker for you.

Cane Safety

General principles for using a cane safely:

1. Cane height. Your cane should be adjusted for your height.
2. Use your cane in the hand opposite to your affected or weaker leg.
3. Replace the rubber tip when it is worn.
4. Consider getting a retractable ice tip for your cane for use in winter.

Walker Safety

General principles for using a walker safely:

1. Walker height. Your walker should be adjusted for your height.
2. Don't let the walker get too far in front of you when you are walking. You should maintain an upright posture and step into the center of the walker.
3. Replace the rubber tips, glides, or tennis balls on the back legs when worn. If your walker has wheels, these also should be renewed when worn.