



Winter for older adults

Winter preparedness and activities for older adults in Calgary

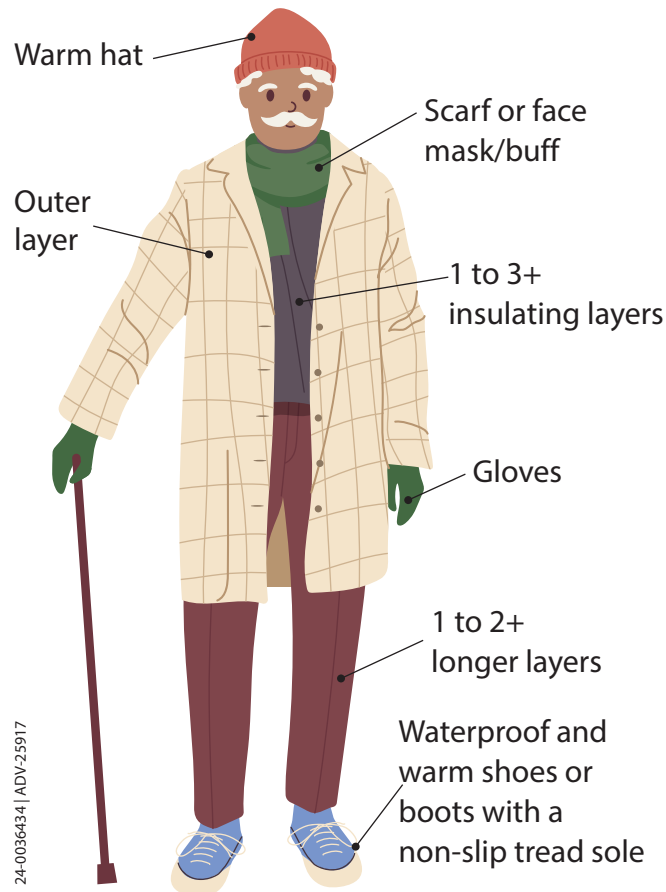
Winter can be a difficult time for some older adults, especially those facing long-term loneliness and social isolation issues. Learning to approach winter by preparing for the cold and preventing falls can help during this time.

For additional information on any of these topics, go to calgary.ca/winterseniors

Getting prepared

How to dress for winter

It's important to dress based on your experience and how cold you feel, as cold affects older adults differently.



Make a plan

Making an emergency action plan and 72-hour kit for just-in-case scenarios can provide added peace of mind in the winter months.



Muscle mass falls as we age, and it becomes physiologically harder to stay warm.

You are exposed to more of the sun's UV (ultraviolet) rays during the winter. Applying sunscreen daily is recommended year-round.

Keeping mentally healthy

Community support and taking part in activities can help bring joy in the winter months. Consider some ideas below:

- Find an activity that you enjoy or learn a new skill.
- Schedule time to stay in touch with family, friends and neighbours.
- Consider adopting a pet if you can care for them.
- Find a faith-based organization to deepen your spirituality and engage with others.
- Check out resources and programs at your local social service agencies, community and seniors' centres and public libraries.
- Join a cause and get involved in your community.
- Connect with resources for counselling and crisis support, such as Access Mental Health (403-943-1500) or carya (403-205-5244).



Physiological differences and acclimatization can all impact whether a person feels cold, individually.

Getting around in winter

Winter transit

To ensure a smooth trip, stay tuned to service updates, dress appropriately for the weather, and plan for the potential of longer trip durations.

Winter walking

Winter is a beautiful time to be outside for a stroll.

- Stay aware – keep your head up and don't lean forward.
- Don't text or talk on your phone and walk at the same time.
- Aim to walk on cleared pathways, avoid shortcuts that haven't been cleared.
- Wet, dark areas on the pavement may be slippery or icy. If you can, walk around them.
- Take extra care when stepping from the last step of a set of stairs.
- Use handrails whenever possible for extra support. Avoid or be extra careful walking on slopes or hills.
- For added stability, walk like a penguin – walk slowly, take small steps and point your toes out slightly to be more stable on icy paths.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets to help keep your balance.
- Try not to carry heavy things that can make you lose your balance, or large things that could block your view. If possible, use a backpack to keep your hands free.



Winter driving

Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle.

Check your vehicle's tires, gas, fluids, wipers, brakes, etc.

Clear snow off your windows and lights before driving



Consider winter tires

Slow down and ensure you are visible to others

Winter supports

- Explore winter programs at your local community organization, walking groups, pen pals, virtual tours, and more for older adults and newcomers.
- Calgary Homeless Foundation's Coordinated Community Extreme Weather Response provides daytime warming spaces and resources for those who are unhoused.
- Parachutes for Pets (403-305-9677) offers a pet foodbank and warming spaces.
- Seniors can receive a care package and a Kind Neighbour to drop by to say hello. Call 403-266-6200 to learn more.
- Nominate or be a Snow Angel (311) and support others in clearing their sidewalk.
- Volunteer with organizations like Calgary Reads (403-514-0180), carya (403-269-9888), etc.

Preventing falls

Be aware

Know your medication, be aware of vision, hearing and balance changes.

Be prepared

Use mobility aids or poles, wear footwear with non-slip tread.

Be active

- Consider regular exercises to improve balance – such as those offered by Finding Balance (780-492-6019).
- Stay connected and active with online and in-person fitness from venues like Calgary Recreation, YMCA, Confederation Park 55+ Activity Centre, and Unison at Kerby.
- Check out skating rinks, cross country skiing or snowshoeing trails, disc golf courses, and events like Chinook Blast.



Free snow shoveling

Eligible older adults may receive snow shoveling services through the Seniors Services Home Maintenance (SSHM) program. The SSHM program supports seniors 65+ living on lower fixed incomes who are eligible for the provincial Special Needs Assistance for Seniors benefit program. Seniors must apply through the Fair Entry Program. Call 311 for more information on how to apply.

Caffeine and alcohol may speed up heat loss.

In partnership with

Calgary

