

Greene Chiropractic Clinic  
1507-B Stillwater Ave  
Cheyenne, WY 82009



307-637-7463



www.greenewellness.com



## WATCH OUT! PREVENT SLIPS & FALLS

Falls are one of the most frequent types of accidents - and often the most dangerous! All age groups are vulnerable, but older adults are most at risk. In fact, 80% of those receiving fatal injury are over the age of 65.

**As people age**, they become less aware of where their feet are. They think they know, but they are mistaken. Errors like that can lead to falls. Because we age from day to day and not overnight, we don't realize that things we ignored in our earlier years can injure or even kill us later on. A pile of magazines or newspapers left on the floor, an unsecured throw rug, lamp cords, and poor lighting on the way to the bathroom have tripped up many older adults. In our youth, our physical responses, vision, recovery mechanisms, and inner-ear functions are so good that we expect them always to be that way. With age, however, all of these strategies become less dependable. A sedentary lifestyle increases the rate of decline. Older adults who are concerned about preventing or delaying such a decline will want to engage in a program of regular exercise tailored to the patient's needs by the doctor of chiropractic. One of the better forms of exercise for this purpose is tai chi, which consists of gentle Asian dance-like moves. Tai chi has been proven to improve balance. Yoga and Qigong (Chi Gung) are also helpful. Walking benefits balance and strengthens the lower body, which typically grows weaker with age. Heart disease, lower-back pain, arthritis, or neurological problems like Parkinson's disease can all throw balance off by causing changes in the gait.

Your doctor of chiropractic may want to assess your balance using any one of a number of different tests. Chiropractic and Balance Proprioception, which provides 60 percent of the body's information about balance, degrades with time. (The remaining balance information comes from the eyes and the ears.) Spinal manipulation therapy, manipulation to extremities, and specific rehabilitation exercises all work to stimulate muscle spindle fibers and joint mechanoreceptors in the body, which helps keep proprioception healthy. This type of stimulation potentially can increase your awareness of where your body is in space, which may help to keep you on your feet.

### Avoiding Falls on the Ice

Walking on ice is extremely dangerous. Many cold-weather injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, driveways, and porches. Keep your steps and walkways as free of ice as possible using rock salt or another chemical de-icing compound. Sand may also be used on walkways to reduce the risk of slipping.

In Wyoming, we often experience "black ice," which is a term for a near-invisible layer of ice that can cover sidewalks and streets. If you're unsure about whether or not the sidewalk or street is slippery, walk slowly and cautiously with your feet pointing outward. This position actually helps you brace yourself better, and it helps protect you to some degree if you slip and fall.

The National Safety Council recommends taking the following precautions on potentially slippery surfaces:

- Avoid wearing high-heeled shoes or boots outside. Instead, wear flat shoes with slip resistant soles or rain/snow boots; both of these provide you with some degree of traction.
- Take short, flat steps. The heels and soles of your shoes should stay in contact with the ground as long as possible, providing you with maximum surface contact.
- Remove your shoes or boots once you get inside. Snow and ice often stick to the soles of shoes and will melt almost immediately as your shoes begin to warm up. The result is a slippery surface and the risk of a fall.

### If you do fall. . .

Try to have as many square inches of your body contact the surface of the floor or ground as possible. This spreads out the impact of the fall on your body. Throw an arm up to avoid landing on your head, but don't try to break a fall with your hands or elbows. Twist or roll your body to land on your side. It's better to land on your buttocks than on your back! Be sure to visit your doctor of chiropractic IMMEDIATELY after any fall. The sooner you go, the sooner your spine will be healthy and normal again. Chiropractic care, combined with exercise and eating well, will help you reach and maintain optimum wellness.

*Thank you to*

The National Safety Council ([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)) and the American Chiropractic Association ([www.amerchiro.org](http://www.amerchiro.org)) for information used in this newsletter.