

# Fall with Grace

When your heel hits slippery ground, you may glide forward and fall. But if you do it the right way, you'll spare yourself the worst of the damage, says Thurmon Lockhart, Ph.D., director of the locomotion research laboratory at Virginia Tech. He helped design a slip-training program for UPS delivery drivers, and his tips can work for you too.

## ARMS

As you begin to fall, fling your arms forward and up so your center of gravity moves forward; this may stabilize you. If you're still falling, quickly lower your arms to your sides. (Don't extend them backward, because you'll land on—and possibly break—your wrists.) Now your arms will hit the ground before your hips do, saving you from a more damaging injury.

## HEAD

Tuck your head as close to your chest as possible. You'll shift your center of gravity forward, which can help you regain balance (or protect your head if you hit the ground).

## EYES

Point your gaze straight ahead. This provides you with the best view of what's around you and which nearby objects to avoid.

## TEETH

Grit your teeth so you don't bite your tongue upon impact.

## THE THING YOU'RE CARRYING

Whatever it is, fling it aside (unless it's a baby). Because your muscles are contracting at an unusually high rate, the weight of anything you're holding can strain them.

## WALK SLOWLY

If you're on slippery ground, take slow, short steps, and extend your arms out to your sides as if you were on a tightrope. Doing this helps you balance and positions your arms closer to where they'll need to be to save you if things go south.

## IF YOU FALL FORWARD

Fall into a pushup position. You'll avoid a nasty head (or face!) injury, and your bent elbows will reduce impact on your wrists.

## LEG

Which leg is slipping? The opposite leg will automatically stomp in an attempt to help you regain balance. The opposite side's elbow should be bent so you can land on your arm and dissipate some of the force away from your hip.

## MUSCLES

Your muscles will naturally tense. Let 'em: Tense muscles protect ligaments and bones.

## BUTT + CORE

Land flat on your rear, and then, in a single, smooth motion, roll onto your hip (the one opposite your slipping leg) to help diffuse the force of the fall.

