As with any exercise program, health experts suggest that you consult your doctor before you start an exercise program.

It is important to be safe while engaging in any sort of physical activity, including climbing stairs. Here are some tips to help you continue to stay safe when climbing stairs.

WAYS TO INCREASE SAFETY AND DECREASE YOUR CHANCE OF INJURY:

• Set an achievable goal, such as five minutes of stair climbing twice per day. Progress slowly, increasing in one-minute increments each time you climb the stairs.

• Listen to your body to avoid injury. Push beyond physical discomfort, but stop exercising if you experience any sharp pains.

• If you need support, hold onto the rail when walking up and down the stairs. To avoid wrist or arm injury, do not use the rail to pull yourself up.

• Make sure there is enough light so you can see where you are stepping.

• Maintain a straight posture to avoid strain to your lower back.

• Be aware of your knee alignment as it can cause a knee or ankle sprain.

• Watch for opening doors at the end of the stairway.

• Drink sips of water before, during, and after exercise even if you aren’t feeling thirsty.

• If climbing stairs outdoors, pay attention to your surroundings including the weather, uneven walking surfaces, and strangers.

• Take your time. Injuries are more likely to occur when you hurry or rush.

Sources: National Institute on Aging at NIH www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life
Fitness Shoes and Clothes http://go4life.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/FitnessClothes.pdf
(Preventing Falls on Stairs) Canada mortgage and housing corporation http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/maho/adse/adse_001.cfm
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