

Stretching. You've seen pro sportsmen and sportswomen do it before the big game. But it's not just for professionals. Before you exercise, spend 10-15 minutes warming up, says Dr Mike.

STRETCH!



Spend another 10-15 minutes cooling down after exercising. It'll keep your muscles feeling good.



Warming up

- Prepares you, physically and mentally, for the physical exercise you're about to get.
- Increases your muscle temperature. Warm muscles work better, and won't get hurt so easily.
- Gives your body's adrenaline time to do its magic. Adrenaline increases your breathing rate and heart rate, and that's good for exercise.
- Makes your muscles feel less sore after exercise.

Cooling down

- Helps your body recover from strenuous exercise.
 - Improves your blood circulation, which is important for feeding your muscles with oxygen and nutrients to replace all that energy you've used up during exercise.
- Allows your heart rate and breathing rate to gradually come down to their normal levels.
- Makes your muscles feel less sore after exercise.

Know your body

TIPS FOR ALL STRETCHING EXERCISES: Stretch only as far as you can go. You should feel the stretch in you muscle, but there shouldn't be any pain.

Hold each stretch for at least 10 seconds and breathe normally. Do 2-3 repetitions of the stretch.



We have lift-off!

These students from Pei Chun Public and Kranji Primary schools were among 4000 who had fun with their Stepometers at a mass event recently. The Stepometer, which you can see on each student's waistband, automatically counts the number of steps you take. Record your daily score – then try to beat it by 10% the following week. Visit www.stepwithit.com.sg for more details.



Write to us! After doing some exercise that you really enjoy, do you ever feel really tired – but really great at the same time? Write to us and tell us about it – your favourite regular exercise and the feeling you get when you're finished. Write to "Step Up Singapore", What's Up (our full address is on the back page), or email step@newsforkids.com.sg.

Have your say, win a prize!

Different sports, different stretches

- The stretches shown on this page are some of the common ones you need to do before you go running or play sports.
- Different sports, such as basketball, badminton or swimming, use different muscles. So, there are some special warming-up and cooling-down stretches for these games. To find out more, visit www.newsforkids.com.sg and click on the "Step Up Singapore" logo (like the one above).

Go online for more!

These readers win prizes from F&N Coca-Cola Singapore:

"I have started eating balanced meals and exercising more. I am sure that by doing so, I will soon be living a much happier lifestyle!" – Geraldine Lim Shannian, Pri 5-02, Rosyth School.

"I have added more physical activity into my life by now walking up a flight of stairs instead of taking a lift or an escalator. I also play badminton and swim with my father daily!" – Sharon Salim, Pri 6/1, Eunus Primary School.

Dr Michael Chia is a specialist in Physical Education and Sports Science at the National Institute of Education. "Step Up Singapore" is part of F&N Coca-Cola Singapore's efforts to promote healthy active lifestyles.