

Leisure

ADVERTISING FEATURE

An A – Z of Fitness: W is for Warm Up

THE role of a warm up is to prepare the body mentally and physically for activity. It also aims to prevent injury and improve performance.

For all types of exercise there is a general requirement for a warming of the muscles. This makes them more supple and better able to react to the demands of the eventual activity. The by-product of muscular movement itself is the heat that will help those same muscles perform more efficiently, so the 'Catch 22' is resolved by providing gently increasing intensity of movement. This will take longer in cold environments and when lightly dressed. Runners, for example, might do some light jogging with active arm movements, and wearing a few layers, in their porch to efficiently warm up in winter or on early mornings. The process shouldn't take forever.

There is another benefit of the increasing physical movement that all exercisers will benefit from, and that is the increased release of

synovial fluid in the freely moveable joints. This lubricant and shock absorber helps prevent the joint from injury. So the weight trainer might perform some light executions of the lifts they are to perform, again wearing layers if the gym is cool.

Don't neglect a warm up in warmer weather and/or environments; the blood is in the skin keeping you cool and needs to be redirected to the muscles. Obviously the warm up will take less time and less clothing is needed.

Both routines will have also succeeded in opening up capillaries in the muscles, improving the delivery of the substances that fuel the workout and readying them to remove the waste products. However, we are starting to see that the warm up should be specific to the type of activity undertaken.

Activities which are aerobic in nature require the heart rate to be increased gradually until the working rate is reached. This is less dangerous for the heart and prevents starting

the activity with an oxygen debt (the deep breathing that continues after aerobic activity finishes). Oxygen debt indicates that breathing hasn't kept pace with activity, and it's not possible to keep going for too much longer in that state. Hence it is highly undesirable at the end of a warm up.

Activities that are dynamic in nature may require controlled 'half speed – half power' practice moves that mimic the eventual performance, e.g. swings with racquets, bats or clubs.

Now to the most controversial aspect – stretching. Research is somewhat contradictory. However, there is a practical problem if it is to be included: how to stay warm and keep a heart rate up whilst taking the time to stretch. In short, static stretches seem to benefit those with known injury and not others. Static stretches can compromise strength work. Dynamic activity may require controlled dynamic stretches.

Joint Effort Fitness

A world first to run its way through Beeston and Chilwell

INTEREST in the world's first Kilomathon, which will weave its way through Beeston and Chilwell, has been overwhelming. Around 6,000 runners from around the UK and across the globe will be descending on Nottingham/ Derby area on the weekend of March 14 to take part in this world first.

The Kilomathon has had such an appeal that entrants are coming from as far north as the Shetland Islands (a mere 680 mile journey to Nottingham) and as far south as Cornwall to take part. However, interest has not just been limited to the shores of the UK: entrants are coming from Europe, Asia and America to run the in the world's first 26.2 kilometre road race.

The Kilomathon will start close to the University of Nottingham and run through Beeston, Chilwell, Long Eaton, Draycott, Borrowash and Elvaston Castle Country

Park. From there, the route runs through Alvaston before finishing in Alvaston Park, Derby.

The race is expected to have an economic impact of more than £1 million for the Nottingham/Derby area, as entries are expected to reach the 6,500 mark by the closing date of February 17. Thousands of runners will stay overnight in local hotels, and many runners bring family/friends/supporters with them, so the local tourist attractions and eateries can expect a busy weekend.

Putting on an event of this scale between two cities is a massive undertaking. Race Director Neil Kilgour and Event Director Caroline Vevers have been busy working together with the relevant local authorities and agencies.

Caroline said, "Everyone has worked together to make the event happen and we would like to sincerely thank

them for their support in making the Kilomathon an event the East Midlands can be proud of."

Geoff Sims, a Derby man, has started the Kilomathon Race series. As Chief Executive of GSi Events, he came up with the idea of a Kilomathon at 26.2 kilometres (16.3 miles) because so many people who run a marathon say: "It's the last 10 miles that are the hardest."

He then decided it needed a catchy name and, remembering the days of the Derby Half Marathon, which some may recall was known as 'the Ramathon', he simply decided to create a new word from 'kilometre' and 'marathon'.

Entries for the Kilomathon will close on February 17, 2010 and there is a £5 discount available for local residents to encourage more local participation. Visit www.kilomathon.com for more information.

News and events from Attenborough Nature Centre

Wildlife Events for Young People

Naturally interested in art?

ATTENBOROUGH Nature Centre is giving teenagers the chance to get involved with nature and have some fun.

Young people aged 14 to 18 can get arty at the Nature Centre and explore a variety of art techniques inspired by the nature reserve and led by artist Rosemary McClellan.

Sessions are held on the first Saturday of every month from 9.30am to

12.30pm. The next session will be held on Saturday, February 6.

A range of activities is included, which may include drawing, photography, collage, manipulation of photos and sculpture. All use the great outdoors environment for inspiration.

Call the Nature Centre on (0115) 972 1777 for more details and to book a place.

Or is bushcraft more your scene?

EVER wanted to learn about wildlife conservation and bushcraft?

The Attenborough Nature Centre is offering Young Rangers aged 13 to 16 the chance to partake in a number of activities including conservation, bushcraft and wildlife surveys.

Booking is essential. Contact the Nature Centre on (0115) 972 1777 for dates and times.

Bittern's Got Talent

THE Nature Centre at Attenborough Nature Reserve has launched a wildlife photography competition.

Staff at the local wildlife haven are calling upon budding photographers and local nature lovers to enter a unique wildlife photography competition. With the recent big freeze bringing the reserve into the spotlight following the sighting of at least five rare bitterns, Attenborough is launching a contest to find the best photo depicting local nature.

Winning entrants will see their shots published in a special 2011 calendar celebrating the reserve's work for wildlife.

The competition follows on from the unprecedented success of Attenborough's

2010 calendar featuring dramatic images of skylines over the reserve, from thunderstorms to snow storms. Selling out within a fortnight, the calendar was the brainchild of Andrew Shaw, Visitor & Education Assistant at the Reserve, who wanted to combine his interests of meteorology and photography to raise funds for the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, the charity which manages the site.

Speaking about the newly launched photography competition, Mr Shaw said:

"Attenborough is a very special place for wildlife. As a celebration of this, our competition is calling on nature lovers to send us their best pictures of local nature. We hope that next year's calendar featuring

the winning entries will be very popular, raising vital funds for the Trust's work for wildlife across Nottinghamshire."

The winning entrants will also see their photograph published as part of a range of special Christmas cards. A panel of local wildlife enthusiasts will select the winners and a prize will be awarded for the best photograph.

If you have captured Nottinghamshire's nature in a photograph, email your entry to enquiries@attenboroughnaturecentre.co.uk. Further details can be found by visiting the website: www.attenboroughnaturecentre.org.uk

Closing date for entries is 7 June, 2010.