

Little respite from the heat



Despite the storms over the past few days, the weather in Singapore continues to be hot and humid, with visitors having to shield themselves from the scorching sun at Gardens by the Bay (above) on April 9. The maximum daily highs in late March and April have seen temperatures hover close to 35 deg C. Experts predict that temperatures in April and May – often the warmest months of the year – could climb higher. But those who have to be out in the heat have their ways to not sweat it, including taking more frequent water breaks and shifting training to cooler hours. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG [SEE THE BIG STORY • A4&5](#)



A family in Toa Payoh Central on April 3. Late March and some days in April saw daily maximum temperatures hover close to 35 deg C despite storms on several days. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SENG.



Seniors at Ulu Pandan Park Connector on March 27. NUI's Dr Malcolm Mahadevan advised people to opt for loose, light clothing that wicks sweat and increases evaporative loss. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG.

Some migrant workers getting a little respite from the heat under colourful umbrellas at a construction site near Bugis on April 3. ST PHOTO: SHINTARO TAY.



Pedestrians waiting in the shade behind a pillar in Orchard Road on April 7. Experts predict that temperatures in April and May, often the warmest months, might climb higher. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG.



A child enjoying a day out in East Coast Park on April 6, decked out in full sun protection gear to guard against harmful rays. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LIAN.

DON'T SWEAT IT

Christie Chia

Ice has been a lifesaver for Singapore Sports School (SSP) student Angelina Tay, 14, during netball training six times a week, when she reaches into a cooler box on the sidelines to beat the heat.

Sizzling temperatures in recent weeks have left her more tired and thirstier than usual, and the ice helps prevent issues like heatstroke as the gears up for competition season.

Having a box of ice on hand during training is just one of several measures the SSP has in place to protect its athletes on days the mercury shoots up.

Speaking to The Straits Times, Angelina said: "It is still manageable for now, but if the weather gets warmer, it will be harder to push ourselves as much as we can."

Experts predict that temperatures in April and May – often the

warmest months of the year – might climb higher, given the lingering effects of the El Nino phenomenon that gripped Singapore from the second half of 2023.

In response to queries, MOE on April 1 said all students taking part in the National School Games will adopt precautions like making sure they rest frequently, and taking more water breaks.

Angelina said she now gets about twice the number of water breaks when two conditions are met – first, the daily maximum temperature hits 35 deg C for three days in a row, and second, the average daily mean temperature is at least 29 deg C.

As the mercury rises, athletes, coaches, students and those who work outdoors are taking extra steps to cope with the punishing heat.

SSP said it adopts heat-management practices similar to guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Education (MOE), including holding training sessions during cooler

parts of the day, as part of efforts to cut down strenuous physical activities in the outdoors between 11am and 4pm.

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Athletes, outdoor workers and soldiers in Singapore find ways to beat the heat

measures drawn up by the Ministry of Defence (MinDef).

Amid rising temperatures in recent months, MOM officers will conduct workplace inspections in the construction, shipyard and process industries to make sure the heat stress measures for outdoor work that have been put in place are proving to be effective, said a March 26 report in the Workplace Safety and Health Council newsletter.

In October 2023, MOM introduced further heat-related protocols for firms employing outdoor workers, like providing hourly breaks of at least five minutes on hotter days.

The duration of the breaks must also increase along with hourly temperatures and level of physical activity performed.

Mr Allan Low, deputy quality, environmental, health and safety director at Teambuild Construction Group, said his firm has adopted

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ACCLIMATISING TO THE HEAT

The best way to build up your body's tolerance is by exposing yourself safely to short bouts of heat and humidity, and gradually increasing the length of exposure – a process known as heat acclimatisation.

MR RAZIF ARIFF, Naval Base Secondary School's football coach.

SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION

Don't wait for symptoms like feeling weak, dizziness, increased thirst, nausea and vomiting or cramps to set in, as these indicate dehydration has already set in.

DR MALCOLM MAHADEVAN, a senior consultant at the Emergency Medicine Department at the National University Hospital.

CHANGING TRAINING HOURS

We are very concerned about the players' health and have been reminding them to hydrate off the pitch as well. If the weather gets worse, we may have to shift training sessions later into the night.

MR SHAHRIN SHARI, Singapore Sports School football academy senior coach.

EASY ACCESS TO DRINKS

We have provided vending machines on site for easier purchase of isotonic and cold drinks, and hope to increase the awareness of heat stress through regular training.

MR ALLAN LOW, deputy quality, environmental, health and safety director at Teambuild Construction Group.

"For work, try and get as much shade as possible."

"Don't wait for symptoms like feeling weak, dizziness, increased thirst, nausea and vomiting or cramps to set in, as these indicate dehydration has already set in."

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