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Food jaunt in Japan

This week, Straits Times food editor Tan Hsueh Yun is in Tokyo noshing on all the best treats the city has to offer, like monkfish hot pot at Isegen. Check out her Facebook page at www.facebook.com/tanhshuehyun



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Eyes eat first

For more mouthwatering food photos, look her up on Instagram @msposhnoh.

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Playpoint managing director Jason Sim demonstrating how to use the outdoor exercise equipment to convert exercise energy into electricity to charge his mobile phone at the Bukit Panjang Ring Road fitness corner.
ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG



VIDEO

Find out more about how the charger works. <http://str.sg/ZHLs>

Keep fit and charge your phone at the same time

Outdoor fitness corner turns energy from exercise into juice for electronic devices

Olivia Ho

Phone battery dying and no power point in sight? If you happen to be at Block 234, Bukit Panjang Ring Road, you can charge your phone at the fitness corner – and burn some calories while you are at it.

Playground consultancy firm Playpoint last October installed an outdoor fitness corner that turns energy generated by exercise into juice for electronic devices.

The fitness corner, the first of its kind in a public housing estate, has a cross trainer, hand bike, spinning bike and recumbent bike – all with USB ports which you can plug a charge cable into.

Playpoint managing director Jason Sim, 40, said the equipment combines two drives that the Government has been pushing for – healthier lifestyles and renewable energy.

“Rather than let all that energy from exercising go to waste, we could put it to good use and help the environment,” he said.

Cycling on one of the bikes for two minutes produces enough energy to charge your phone by 1 per cent. To fully charge a dead battery, users have to cycle for more than three hours. Mr Sim admitted this was rather long, but said: “The objective is for you to stay and use the equipment for longer, to keep fit.”

A fitness buff, he first chanced upon the equipment two years ago,

when he was watching a foreign television programme which featured British green gym manufacturer. The Great Outdoor Gym Company.

The \$8,000 equipment set in Bukit Panjang is the first that Playpoint has brought to Singapore, but Mr Sim hopes to get more installed in other estates they are consultants for, such as Punggol and Sengkang.

The firm installs outdoor equipment in five countries across Asia.

In Kuala Lumpur, it has set up a similar fitness corner, but one where the energy from cycling goes towards lighting street lamps. Mr Sim is considering bringing this version to Singapore, too.

Residents have been slow to catch on to the fitness corner so far. When The Straits Times visited it last Saturday evening and yesterday morning, few were using it to charge their devices.

Housewife Carole Lee, 31, likes to cycle on the bikes for fitness, but does not charge her phone there as she rarely takes her cable out with her. “I prefer to charge my phone at home overnight,” she said.

Safety coordinator Mohd Ro-haizad, 47, said: “I can watch YouTube on my phone while cycling and it will still be charging. I think I should use this more often. It's free and it burns calories, so why not?”

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• Additional reporting by Bridget Tan