

# Flexible Fung works with skaters

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Twenty-eight years have passed since Lori Fung captured gold for Canada in rhythmic gymnastics at the Olympics.

But the unforgettable experience of topping the podium in Los Angeles is a memory that remains, feelings that return with the Summer Games every four years.

"It's just something, I don't know, it's almost unreal," Fung said. "You see it happening on the Olympics, like this summer the Olympics (in London, England) was on and you're just kind of remembering everything, it's just like all back again."

Like any athlete, Fung has faced setbacks.

"Then when I saw people fail, I was like, 'I know that feeling,'" said Fung, referring to mistakes made by Olympians in London.

During her tenure as a competitive athlete in rhythmic gymnastics, Fung captured seven national titles from 1982 to 1988. She won Four Continents titles three times in the 80s, and was the Swiss International overall champion in 1985. She was inducted in Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 2004.

Fung's life today is much different than it was in 1984. A 49-year-old Vancouver product who's married with three hockey-playing sons, she may spend more time around the rink than gymnastics facilities. Her husband Dean Methorst, a former junior player, is the family's biggest hockey mentor. But Fung has done her part to train athletes for on- and off-ice workouts.

For nearly a decade, Fung has been leading training courses for figure skating groups. She's also worked with hockey players, martial artists, dancers and other athletes.

Her classes focus on flexibility, not a surprise given her history as a competitive gymnast. On Monday, she ran a session for members of the Spruce City Skating Club on the Heather Park Middle School fields.

"With this class, I'm just going to give them a general flexibility class, really light," Fung said minutes before guiding the Prince George figure skaters. "But what happens is once I'm working with the athletes, I start to notice where their weaknesses are. I'll notice whether their strength is matching their flexibility, or vice versa, so some children I have to strengthen them up because they're way too flexible, but they have no strength. Others are way too strong with no flexibility so I have to gear classes to work with them and it's on a regular basis all year round, once a week."

The regular classes are held in the Lower Mainland, where Fung still resides today. What also brought her to Prince George was her 1997-born son Alex Methorst, who attended the training camp of the Western Hockey League's Cougars on the weekend.

Spruce City Skating Club director of skating Rory Allen played a lead role in bringing in Fung for Monday's class. Fung noted that she and Allen are working together to try and line up another visit for a weekend flexibility seminar in Prince George.

Fung stresses the importance of flexing exercises in preventing injuries. For athletes, it's less enjoyable than competing.



Alistair McINNIS/Free Press

**Olympian Lori Fung runs members of the Spruce City Skating Club through a stretching drill on Monday at the Heather Park Middle School fields.**

"They hate it, absolutely hate it, but it is so important," she said. "They'll never realize how many times they

might get hit somewhere or go over an ankle and they didn't get injured, and it's because of the flexibility."

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