

# Staying afloat

## Brief summary:

In this activity you will experiment with the surface tension of water using pepper and dishwashing liquid.

## You will need:

- Small bowl
- Ground pepper
- Dishwashing liquid
- Cocktail stick or toothpick
- Water

## What to do:

**Step 1.** Half fill a small bowl with water.

**Step 2.** Sprinkle pepper on the surface of the water, forming a small layer.

**Step 3.** Dip your cocktail stick or toothpick into the washing-up liquid, then dip the tip of the stick in the middle of the water.

**Step 4.** As the washing-up liquid touches the water, watch what is happening to the pepper. The pepper should spread out and merge together forming patterns.

## Take it further:

Experiment with floating different materials on the water, and experiment with different types of liquid, such as salt water, juice or oil.

Have a look at our other surface tension experiment: *Speedy fish experiment*.

## Big questions:

- What animals use surface tension?
- Do ships and boats use surface tension?



For more information on how you can help our environment, or to make some suggestions of your own, please go to [www.coolaustralia.org](http://www.coolaustralia.org)