

INTRODUCING THE HORIZONS



Cover by- Ivanna Tymoshenko
Our Elementary School Student

January 2025



International Schooling®
Your School. Your Location. Your Time.

Table of contents

Editor's note - January 2025

CURRENT EVENTS

A Nation United in Anger Following the Kolkata Incident

STEM

Monkeypox: The Next COVID-19?

Space Stranded - The Story of Two Astronauts

Liquid Biopsies

Why Are Students Afraid of Math?

ENVIRONMENTAL

Illness-Caused by Pathogens and an Unexpected Guest: Climate Change

TRENDING

From Fat to That: What Happened to Nikocado Avocado?

INSPIRATIONAL & PSYCHOLOGY

Techniques to Overcome Insomnia

How Music Affects Our Mood

Understanding How Environment and Surroundings Affect Our Habits

Student leadership:

We are thrilled to announce the launch of The Horizons, our new online magazine created by students, for students! This initiative represents a unique opportunity for students to explore their passions, develop new skills, and share their voices with the school community.

The Horizons is proudly led by a dynamic team of students who are passionate about fostering creativity, collaboration, and community within our school. Each leadership team member plays a pivotal role in bringing the magazine to life, ensuring every piece of content reflects the diverse voices and talents of our student body.



Editor-in-Chief: Saanjh Balpande

As the visionary behind The Horizons, Saanjh oversees the magazine's overall direction, ensuring that every issue aligns with its mission to provide a platform for student expression. She works closely with contributors, editors, and designers to maintain high standards of quality and creativity.



Managing Editor: Fadumo Omar

Fadumo ensures the smooth operation of the magazine, coordinating with teams, managing deadlines, and assisting contributors in polishing their work. Her organizational skills keep the magazine running efficiently, issue after issue.



Director of Design: Safana Alfradi

Our Director of Design, Safana, is responsible for the magazine's stunning visuals. From layouts to graphics, she ensures every page is engaging and visually appealing.

Graphic Designers

Graphic Designers add an artistic flair to the magazine, creating illustrations and design elements that shape the articles.

Copy Editors

The Copy Editing Team plays a critical role in maintaining the magazine's professionalism. They review submissions for grammar, style, and clarity, ensuring each piece is polished and ready for publication.

Journalists and writers

The core of The Horizons, our team of student journalists and writers covers a wide range of topics, from current events to pop culture. Their work forms the foundation of each issue, offering fresh perspectives and thought-provoking content.

Our leadership team embodies the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and passion that defines The Horizons. Together, they create a magazine that not only showcases individual talent but also strengthens the bonds of our school community.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE TEAM?

Students interested in contributing to The Horizons, whether as a writer, editor, or designer, are encouraged to reach out. This is your chance to gain a valuable skillset, and be part of something extraordinary!

[APPLY NOW!](#)



Editor's note

"Success is not the final destination.
It's the journey." - Earl Nightingale

In our digital world, the idea of a school community has changed. Technology gives us great opportunities for learning, but it can sometimes make us feel alone. This magazine aims to close that gap and help us feel connected to our online classmates. This first edition marks the start of an exciting journey. It is more than just a collection of articles; it is a project that will bring us closer as a community.

This magazine offers something for everyone: a chance to express yourself, show your talents, and be part of something important. Whether you want to be a writer, a graphic designer, or an editor, you

can explore different activities and work with others in a creative and friendly space. We invite you to help shape the future of the magazine. In this edition, you will find various success stories, including Nikocado Avocado's transformation, recent findings on the severe effects of climate change, and how music affects our minds and habits. Let this magazine be your platform, your voice, and your chance to create something amazing. Together, we can build a connected community— one story, one idea, one spark at a time.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH,
Editor-In-Chief, Saanjh Balpande
Managing Editor, Fadumo Omar

THE HORIZONS



A Nation United In Anger Following Kolkata Incident

The tragedy of August 2024, from RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata, India, involving a trainee doctor being attacked and killed was the start of riots in the republic. The incident took place right inside the hospital, seen as a place where patients should feel most secure and get healed. This led to women's marches demanding better security measures.

Moumita Debnath, the victim, was a medical professional and was targeted while she was on duty. The fact that the sexual assault and murder took place at a hospital, where patients are meant to be saved, ignited public anger that women are not safe even in environments that are presumed to protect them. This made the residents in Kolkata and many other towns in India come out to demonstrate. The roads were filled with doctors, medical students, and the common citizens who were calling upon the authorities to address this issue by enforcing stricter laws against assault in order to put a stop to violence against women. The protests showed unity and determination as people from various backgrounds expressed their anger collectively.

The incident also underlined a major concern in India. Cases of sexual assaults on women have been on the increase each year. Even though there have been many years of protestations and changes in the law, assault is still a rampant problem in the country. The case in Kolkata drew attention to the predicament of females in India which raises the necessity for a societal change.

After the protests, the government launched an investigation into the case and took steps to address the concerns raised by protesters. This crime brought about wider discussions regarding whether laws currently in place are effective enough for safeguarding women against molestation and other forms of sexual abuse.

The uprising happened because of the flaws present in the justice system that led to fury and anger among the populace. This led to the formation of movements aimed at building an India where every woman would be safe from any sexual harassment or abuse thus preventing another woman from becoming a victim.





Monkeypox: The Next COVID-19?

Fresh out of a pandemic, we as a species may feel immune to a pandemic in the near future, but a new threat looms: monkeypox. As the WHO now knows it, monkeypox is a disease that spreads via close contact and causes many symptoms ranging from skin rashes and headaches to fevers and swollen lymph nodes.

While monkeypox has been historically endemic to Central Africa for many years, a global outbreak of the clade II variant started as early as May 2022 in the UK. There were over 100,000 infections and 200 deaths outside of countries where the disease was endemic. Mpox mainly affected the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi in the past few years, but other countries have been affected too such as Nigeria.

In August 2024, the first case of monkeypox from the deadlier clade I variant outside of Africa was reported in Sweden, with a resurgence of both variants in Africa. In the same month, the WHO declared monkeypox to be a "public health emergency of international concern", and that ignoring these endemics could result in a similar global outbreak to 2022's outbreak, if not more catastrophic.

However, while monkeypox is impacting many Central African nations, it is very unlikely for it to become a pandemic. Diseases such as COVID-19 and swine flu are typically highly infectious and spread through airborne particles that can travel very large distances. Monkeypox, on the other hand, only spreads through close contact, typically skin-to-skin contact.

When it comes to mortality rates, COVID-19 has a mortality rate of 2.3% meanwhile monkeypox's mortality rate differs by variant: the more common clade II variant has a much lower 0.2% mortality rate and the rarer clade I variant has a mortality rate of 3.6%. In addition, monkeypox has been observed in humans since 1970, so it is more understood by scientists than COVID-19. Moreover, there is already a tested monkeypox vaccine which is being distributed through shipments to countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Although monkeypox cases continue to rise and logistical challenges are delaying the availability of vaccinations to remote populations, these factors alone do not increase the risk of a global monkeypox outbreak.

Space Stranded: The Story of Two Astronauts

The Mission That Went Awry

The mission began on June 5, 2024, when Wilmore and Williams launched aboard the Starliner for a test mission to the ISS. This mission was crucial for evaluating the spacecraft's performance before it could be used for regular crewed missions. However, upon approaching the ISS, the Starliner encountered significant problems, including leaks in its propulsion system and some thrusters shutting down.

Technical Challenges

The thrusters on the Starliner are the main source of the problem. Engineers have conducted a great deal of ground testing, but they still don't fully understand the physics underlying the propulsion system's shortcomings.

To make matters more complicated, the thrusters' performance in space has been inconsistent. Being cautious, NASA decided to keep the astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS) until they could guarantee a safe return.

Potential Solutions

NASA is looking into a number of ways to ensure the astronauts return home safely. Sending the Starliner back to Earth on its own, without the crew, is one option. In order to retrieve Wilmore and Williams, a SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft carrying two astronauts would need to be launched which could prolong their stay until February 2025.

Life on the ISS

The International Space Station (ISS) is designed to accommodate long stays, despite the fact that being stranded there may seem terrifying. With its current configuration of seven bedrooms and three bathrooms, the station offers the astronauts a reasonably comfortable living space. Furthermore, with more people on board, more scientific work can be completed.

Looking Ahead

These circumstances highlight the difficulties and unpredictability of space travel. The safety and welfare of the astronauts continue to be the top priorities while NASA and Boeing attempt to fix the Starliner's problems. Despite being unplanned, their extended mission provides important lessons for upcoming space exploration projects.



Liquid biopsies

Imagine being told you may or may not be dying. When doctors find a tumour, they are often oblivious as to whether or not it is cancerous without further investigation. The issue is, that the only way to confirm this is to put your life at risk in another way by doing a biopsy. A biopsy, according to WebMD, is a sample of tissue taken from the body in order to examine more closely. It can be used to examine any abnormal body tissue but is most commonly done to look for cancer. Biopsies have some risks associated with most surgeries such as infections and stroke, and some more lethal complications such as hemorrhaging (severe bleeding) if the tumour is in a difficult position. However, generally, they are very low-risk procedures.

Despite it being low, the risk is still present which is why liquid biopsies are a promising alternative. They are basically extensive laboratory tests done on blood, urine, or other body fluid samples in order to detect circulating tumor cells (CTC), circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA), RNA, or other molecules that could have been released by a tumor. By detecting changes in ctDNA or CTC levels, physicians can assess how effective a treatment is. It can also help identify cancer recurrence in patients after treatment. Another major advantage is the ability to test these things multiple times as it is a non-invasive procedure, making it easier to detect disease progression and recovery. Liquid biopsies are also able to detect disease advancement before it causes symptoms or appears in any imaging. This is desirable as catching cancer early is essential to treating it and increases the likelihood of the patient's survival.

Liquid biopsies have actually proven to be more insightful than regular biopsies in some cases as they are more likely to find genetic mutations in the cancer cells. This is because a small sample removed may not show all the genetic mutations from all parts of the cancerous growth. Moreover, some people cannot handle regular biopsies as they are invasive and the patient may have a compromised immune system or other health circumstances, making a seemingly low-risk surgery very life-threatening. Being able to conduct quick tests in this way solves this problem.

As of now, liquid biopsy is a relatively new approach, introduced in 2010, and is limited to certain cancers such as breast, lung, and prostate cancer. This is still very promising, as it is rare that a discovery has this big of an effect after less than 20 years. Although much more research and development is needed, scientists say that they can see this valuable tool for detection and treatment expanding to all types of cancer within the next decade.



Why are students afraid of maths?

Sitting for a maths exam and even studying for one is proven to be the most nerve-wracking activity. Up to 25% of kids experience moderate or high levels of math anxiety. Maths anxiety (MA) is defined as "feelings of tension and anxiety that interfere with the manipulation of numbers and the solving of mathematical problems in a wide variety of ordinary life and academic situations".

Maths anxiety is normal, however, the misconception is that it is linked to intelligence or ability. It is not just the case that children with a low mathematical ability struggle with maths anxiety either. In one study, 77% of children with maths anxiety were normal to high achievers in the subject. This problem stems from a fear of failing or a pressure to do well. If this stress becomes persistent with every exam or test, the student will start a cycle and continue feeling anxious and get low grades.

The causes of maths anxiety vary from person to person but some examples are pressure from parents or guardians, racial stereotypes, and negative experiences.

Maths has always been portrayed as an 'impossible subject' and 'useless' due to many students believing that it is detached from the real world. When students do not see their future career aligning with maths, they cannot see the practical value of maths and therefore deem it unimportant.

They tend to build the mindset of maths being too 'hard' which makes it easier for them to quit. Additionally, maths builds upon later topics rely heavily on understanding earlier ones. If students don't fully comprehend foundational concepts, more advanced topics can become even more abstract and confusing. This growing nature of maths creates a widening gap, leaving students feeling lost and overwhelmed.

To deal with maths anxiety or any type of anxiety, the first step is to recognize the emotion. Being aware of the feelings arising is very helpful to calm down and regulate. Realizing and understanding that this will not be something to stress about in the future and releasing all the tension knowing that this is a phenomenon that happens to everybody is imperative. Then comes the actual maths practice and easing into it. Maths is not a subject you can perfect in one try, it requires practice and persistence. 65% of students feel that studying at a desk or table improves their ability to stay focused as opposed to studying in bed or on a couch, according to a study by Harvard Business Review. Lastly, confidence and self-belief are key to taking an exam and having faith in knowing that your studying has paid off.

Maths is a subject that truly advocates the message of 'practice makes perfect'; put in the effort and results become guaranteed. Unlike other subjects, to become a skillful mathematician you must develop perseverance, dedication, and interest. With regular practice and willingness to do well, students can get over maths anxiety and succeed in this fascinating subject.





Illness-Caused by Pathogens and an Unexpected Guest: Climate Change

Illness is a disease, usually caused by pathogens. Climate change is long-term changes in weather patterns. Two terms that have nothing in common have come together to enhance the spread of disease, an alarming uprising for society! The merging of these two factors is way stronger than we think. So much so that experts in infectious disease are exhorting the medical community to develop educational systems to allow people to understand the link between global warming and the distribution of parasites.

Every year 420,000 deaths occur due to illnesses such as food poisoning (as per the National Institute of Environmental Sciences). Imagine the effect of climate change on this number. Let's discuss the science behind it:

Higher temperatures and changes in rain patterns cause the development and spreading of pathogens (e.g. the vibrio species). This is also the case for vectors. One of the reasons is migration, since animals relocate away from non-suitable habitats, they bring alongside them several pathogens, allowing their distribution in new ecosystems. The pathogens may then transfer to the food eaten by these animals. An example of this is aflatoxins infecting maize, of which the infection rate has increased by 25% in Europe.

This not only causes food-borne illnesses if consumed but also causes faster rates of spoilage. Another example of illnesses spreading due to climate change is the spread of malaria. In 2023, according to Matthew Phillips (Massachusetts General Hospital), malaria cases began appearing in Florida and Texas. Even though only 6 cases arose, this has happened for the first time in 20 years. Florida and Texas are states where the cold weather usually reduces the chances of diseases like malaria spreading. However, as global warming is on the rise, the weather becomes warmer, hence increasing the chances of mosquito survival and spread (mosquitos are the vectors of plasmodium - which causes malaria).

Luckily, Matthew Phillips has stated this is in fact not a 'hopeless situation'. Health workers are encouraged to further educate patients on the dangers of climate change, and the effect it has on their health. Moreover, educational institutions are advised to integrate courses on climate change and its effects (beyond effects on the planet) into their teaching systems. At the end of the day, it's a planet we all share, and mitigating such crises can save many lives from being lost to illnesses in the future.

From Fat to That: What Happened to Nikocado Avocado?

Nicholas Perry, better known as Nikocado Avocado, first rose to fame on YouTube for his mukbangs, which featured him consuming large portions of food while engaging with his audience.

Initially, his content was lighthearted and humorous, gaining him a large following base. However, as his fame grew, so did his greed for views. In pursuit of this, Nikocado began to push the boundaries of what he consumed – portions going from large to gluttonous, often featuring unorthodox and excessive meals.

His swift downfall became a viral meme featuring him in front of his huge snack pantry, saying, "I kind of have OCD. Do you mean OBCD (obesity)"

Fans quickly noticed this change, pointing out his significant weight gain and – expressing concerns for his health and wellbeing. Many critics argued that he promoted unhealthy eating habits, contributing to a toxic culture surrounding food and body image.

The surprise? He had been sharing only pre-recorded content for two years while secretly losing weight – a journey he called "the greatest social experiment" of his life.

In recent events, he shocked the entire internet by revealing his weight loss of over 250 pounds. Claiming to be "always two steps ahead."

This feeble attempt to rebrand himself by focusing on healthier choices seems opportunistic rather than genuine, leading many to question the authenticity of his transformation, merely unbelieving of it.

Not long after his YouTube video titled "Two Steps Ahead"

He posted a TikTok doing the recent viral 'apple dance', confirming the authenticity of his weight loss. Regardless, this procured mixed reactions from the entirety of the internet, with many still skeptical and in disbelief.

He responded to this with a statement – "While everybody pointed and laughed at me for over-consuming, I was in total control the entire time. In reality, people become completely absorbed with internet personalities and obsessively watch their content."

"That is where a deeper level of over-consuming lies, and it's the parallel I wanted to make"



Beating Insomnia

Tips for a Restful Night

Insomnia is a common condition among many people and it causes sleeplessness and mental health issues. The condition where people find it difficult to either fall asleep or remain asleep leads to exhaustion, grumpiness, lack of reasoning ability, depression, and more serious ailments such as high blood pressure or chronic anxiety disorder. Luckily, various methods and practices are available that can help to deal with sleep deprivation and restore a healthy sleeping schedule. Here's a list of some of the most effective methods to overcome insomnia.

Establish a Consistent Sleep Schedule

The most effective treatment is to wake up and sleep at the same time every day, including weekends.

Setting the body's internal clock (circadian rhythm) is made easier by sticking to a sleep schedule. When this rhythmic cycle is working in tandem, it is no longer a chore to fall asleep or to get out of bed and it feels quite effortless.

Tip: Set an alarm not just for waking up, but also for going to bed. This signals your brain that it's time to wind down.

Create a Relaxing Pre-Sleep Routine

In most instances, anxiety and stress are the ones to cause sleep deprivation in any individual. Creating a relaxing pre-sleep routine is also helpful in giving signals to both your body and mind to slow down. Some helpful relaxation techniques include:

- Deep breathing exercises: Inhale slowly through your nose, hold for a few seconds, and exhale through your mouth. This promotes relaxation by activating your parasympathetic nervous system.
- Progressive muscle relaxation: Tense and release each muscle group in your body, starting from your toes and working your way up to your head.
- Meditation or mindfulness: Engage in guided meditation or simple mindfulness exercises to quiet racing thoughts.

Refrain from any activities that can cause activation for at least one hour before bedtime, such as physical activities, working on a computer, or doing activities that don't require one to stay still. The blue light from electronic gadgets such as phones and computers can produce stimulation that inhibits the sleep hormone.

Optimize Your Sleep Environment

A bedroom is one of the most important rooms for sleep, and it should be free of distractions while being comfortable as well. Here are ways to optimize your sleep environment:

- Keep it dark: Use blackout curtains or an eye mask to block light. Even small amounts of light can hinder your ability to fall asleep.
- Control noise: Earplugs, white noise machines, or calming soundscapes (like rain or ocean sounds) can help drown out disruptive noise.
- Set the temperature: Cooler room temperatures (around 60–67°F or 15–19°C) are generally more conducive to sleep. Use breathable bedding and pajamas to avoid overheating.

Limit Napping During the Day

Daytime napping, especially for those who have missed their required amount of sleep, can be irresistibly alluring. Nonetheless, it can make insomnia worse. If you have to take a nap, limit it to a nap time of 20–30 minutes and not in the late afternoon or evening. Long midday naps can mess up one's sleep cycle making it harder to sleep at night.



Exercise Regularly

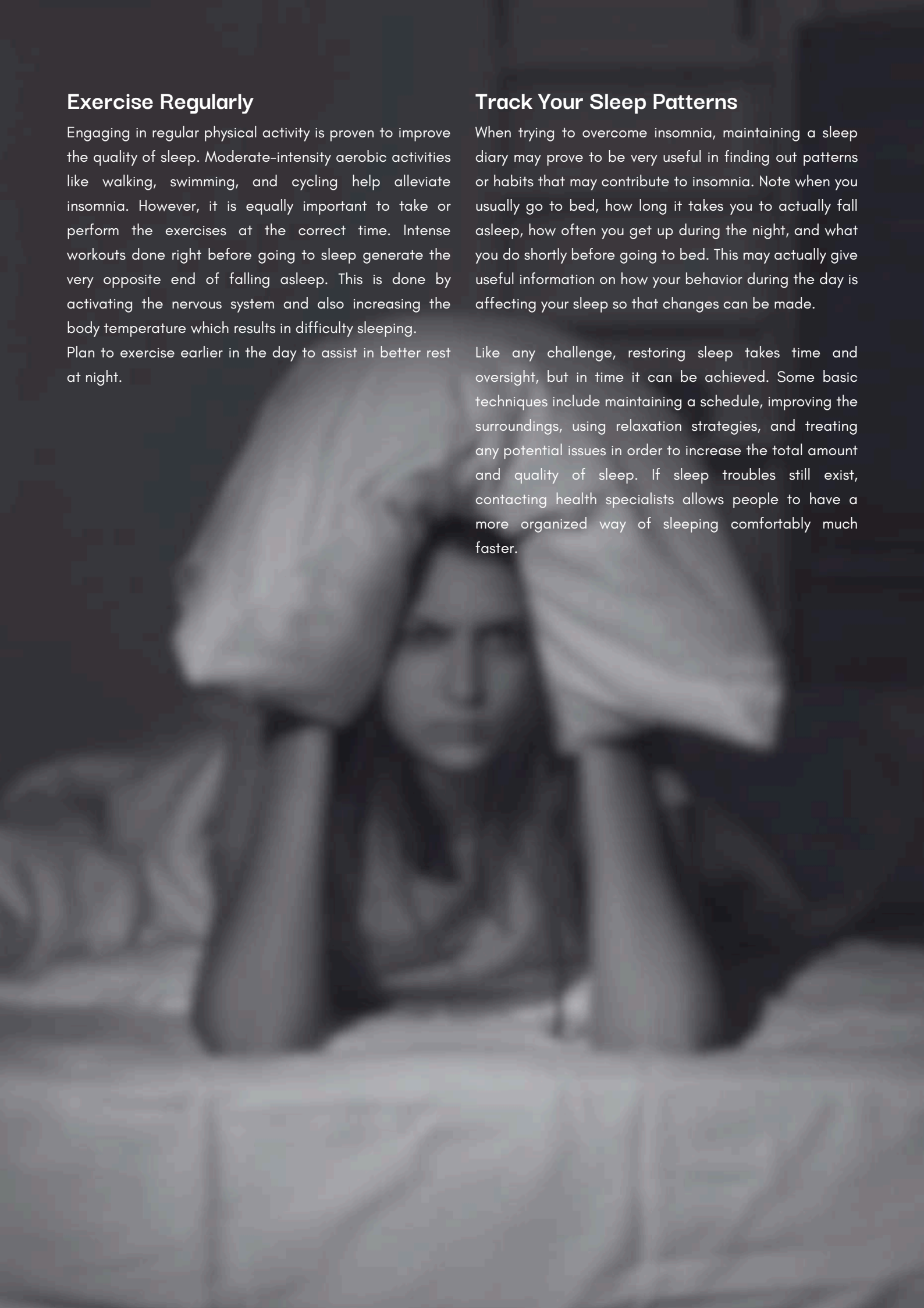
Engaging in regular physical activity is proven to improve the quality of sleep. Moderate-intensity aerobic activities like walking, swimming, and cycling help alleviate insomnia. However, it is equally important to take or perform the exercises at the correct time. Intense workouts done right before going to sleep generate the very opposite end of falling asleep. This is done by activating the nervous system and also increasing the body temperature which results in difficulty sleeping.

Plan to exercise earlier in the day to assist in better rest at night.

Track Your Sleep Patterns

When trying to overcome insomnia, maintaining a sleep diary may prove to be very useful in finding out patterns or habits that may contribute to insomnia. Note when you usually go to bed, how long it takes you to actually fall asleep, how often you get up during the night, and what you do shortly before going to bed. This may actually give useful information on how your behavior during the day is affecting your sleep so that changes can be made.

Like any challenge, restoring sleep takes time and oversight, but in time it can be achieved. Some basic techniques include maintaining a schedule, improving the surroundings, using relaxation strategies, and treating any potential issues in order to increase the total amount and quality of sleep. If sleep troubles still exist, contacting health specialists allows people to have a more organized way of sleeping comfortably much faster.



How Music Affects Our Mood

We use it in our everyday lives, during tasks like studying or driving. The music choices reflect what emotions we want to feel, either listening to the words or to the tune, each song would have a different feel. We would categorize each song with an action or a feeling, creating playlists for every situation we've been in. Music fills the silence in our everyday activities making our lives much more enjoyable and motivating.

When we listen to music, it can help manage stress or negative emotions, it helps us calm down as it creates something that we can focus on. For example, listening to sad music can provide a sense of empathy and understanding, helping people cope with difficult situations. We can regulate how we feel, as a way to have control. When we are in difficult situations we sometimes let our emotions get the better of us, and listening to music helps create a momentary barrier between our head and the issue.

Music, or certain songs can trigger memories and emotions associated with past events. This can evoke feelings of nostalgia and comfort. Particular songs would remind the person of a specific memory. These feelings of nostalgia can be created with certain lyrics or with a small but memorable tune, we are able to remember them for a very long time especially if the memory connected to the song is unforgettable.

Listening to upbeat music can boost happiness and energy levels. Songs with an upbeat fast tempo or melody make you feel energized, and would almost feel like an adrenaline burst. Studies have shown that listening to happy music can improve mood and even enhance physical health.

The chemical side of music is that it affects the neurotransmitters in the brain like dopamine and serotonin, which play a role in mood regulation.

These chemicals can give you feelings of pleasure and motivation. This is why listening to an upbeat song while you are sad makes you feel better and happier compared to before you listen to the song.

Music can also reduce anxiety and stress, and act as a release allowing the brain to settle and calm down. This therapeutic use can enhance cognitive function and also improve our mental health. Listening to calming music, like classical or instrumental pieces, can help relax the mind and body.

These songs almost force the brain to slow down and fully appreciate melody, allowing you to temporarily forget about the root of your stress.



How Environment and Surroundings Affect Our Habits During The School Year

Every day, our mind is taking in thousands of different kinds of information; e.g. visual information from our eyes. These surroundings significantly shape our habits. Whether it's our classrooms, the people we spend time with, or the atmosphere we create for ourselves at home, these factors can have a powerful impact on our daily routines, study habits, and overall well-being.

Our environment might sometimes serve as a trigger for specific behaviors. For example, walking inside a library may make you want to read or study more because of the quiet and inviting atmosphere. Similarly, being in school might convey that it is time to concentrate and study, reinforcing good habits. However, our home is frequently more relaxed, making it easy to fall into unproductive habits such as watching TV or browsing through social media. Additionally, clutter in the home can lead to mental disarray and hinder one's ability to concentrate on tasks like studying or preparing for exams. It's easier to develop better study habits and raise your academic performance by paying attention to your surroundings during the school year. One way to do this is by setting up a calm, comfortable, and clean workspace. Recognizing these triggers might assist you in modifying your environment to promote better behaviors.

Additionally, the people around us have a greater impact on our actions than we think.

Peer pressure is common in schools. Having friends who are committed to their studies and engage in positive activities may motivate you to adopt similar habits.

However, spending too much time with people who lack motivation or have unproductive habits may result in distractions and procrastination. Surround yourself with individuals who will support and motivate you to attain your academic goals.

The structure of the school year provides an amazing framework that supports the formation of routines. Getting up at the same time every day, attending classes, and meeting deadlines may all help you establish productive routines. This plays a crucial role in supporting a healthy lifestyle by encouraging regular breaks, extracurricular activities, and study schedules. To succeed in the long run, it might be difficult to sustain these habits outside of the classroom, especially on weekends and holidays which is why it's important to build a proper framework now. It's also important to make time for the things we love. When planning out your schedule just remember too much of everything is never good.

Throughout the academic year, it's essential to keep in mind that our surroundings and environment have an enormous impact on the habits we form. By organizing our physical spaces, surrounding ourselves with positive influences, and maintaining structure, we can create a foundation for success. By being mindful of how our surroundings impact us, we can take control of our habits and ensure that they are aligned with our academic and personal goals.



THANKYOU!

See you in the next edition!



Art by- **Ivanna Tymoshenko**
Our Elementary School Student

 **International Schooling®**
Your School. Your Location. Your Time.

 support@internationalschooling.org

 Info@internationalschooling.org

 www.internationalschooling.org

 **111 SOMERSET ROAD, LEVEL
13, TRIPLEONE SOMERSET,
SINGAPORE - 238164**