

# MOVE FOR A HEALTHIER MIND

*Active April*

*The Health & Mind club*

## **"Move Your Body, Fuel Your Mind!"**

A new academic year means new opportunities, fresh challenges, and the excitement of what's ahead. It's normal to feel a mix of energy and uncertainty, but movement can help set the tone for success! Staying active sharpens focus, eases stress, and boosts confidence whether it's a morning walk, a quick stretch, or a fun dance. This April let's move for a healthier mind and step into the year with strength!

## **How Movement Impacts Mood: Move, Breathe, Thrive**

Like waves crashing against the shore, movement sends waves of calm through your mind. A simple step, a stretch, a deep breath all shifts something inside. Stress loosens, thoughts clear, and your body remembers what it's made for. Just move and let the tide take care of the rest.

### **1) Movement and Mood Enhancement:**

**Endorphin Release:** Physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, which are natural mood boosters that help reduce pain and increase feelings of pleasure.

**Serotonin & Dopamine Boost:** Exercise increases serotonin (which regulates mood and anxiety) and dopamine (which plays a role in pleasure and motivation).

### **2) Stress Reduction Through Movement:**

**Cortisol Regulation:** Exercise helps regulate cortisol (the stress hormone), preventing chronic stress buildup.

**Mind-Body Connection:** Activities like yoga and tai chi combine movement with breathing and mindfulness, reducing stress and promoting relaxation.

**Physical Stress Relieves Mental Stress:** Engaging in movement provides a healthy way to process stress physically and prevent its buildup in the body.



### 3) Brain Function and Cognitive Benefits: Neurogenesis (Brain Growth):

Movement stimulates the growth of new brain cells, particularly in the hippocampus (the brain's memory center).

Improved Focus & Productivity: Regular movement enhances cognitive function, making tasks like learning, problem-solving, and concentration more effective.

### 4) How to Incorporate More Movement Daily:

- Take short walks throughout the day (especially in nature).
- Stretch or do light yoga in the morning or before bed.
- Use active commuting (biking, walking, taking the stairs).
- Engage in sports, dance, or recreational activities you enjoy.

### Benefits of staying active:

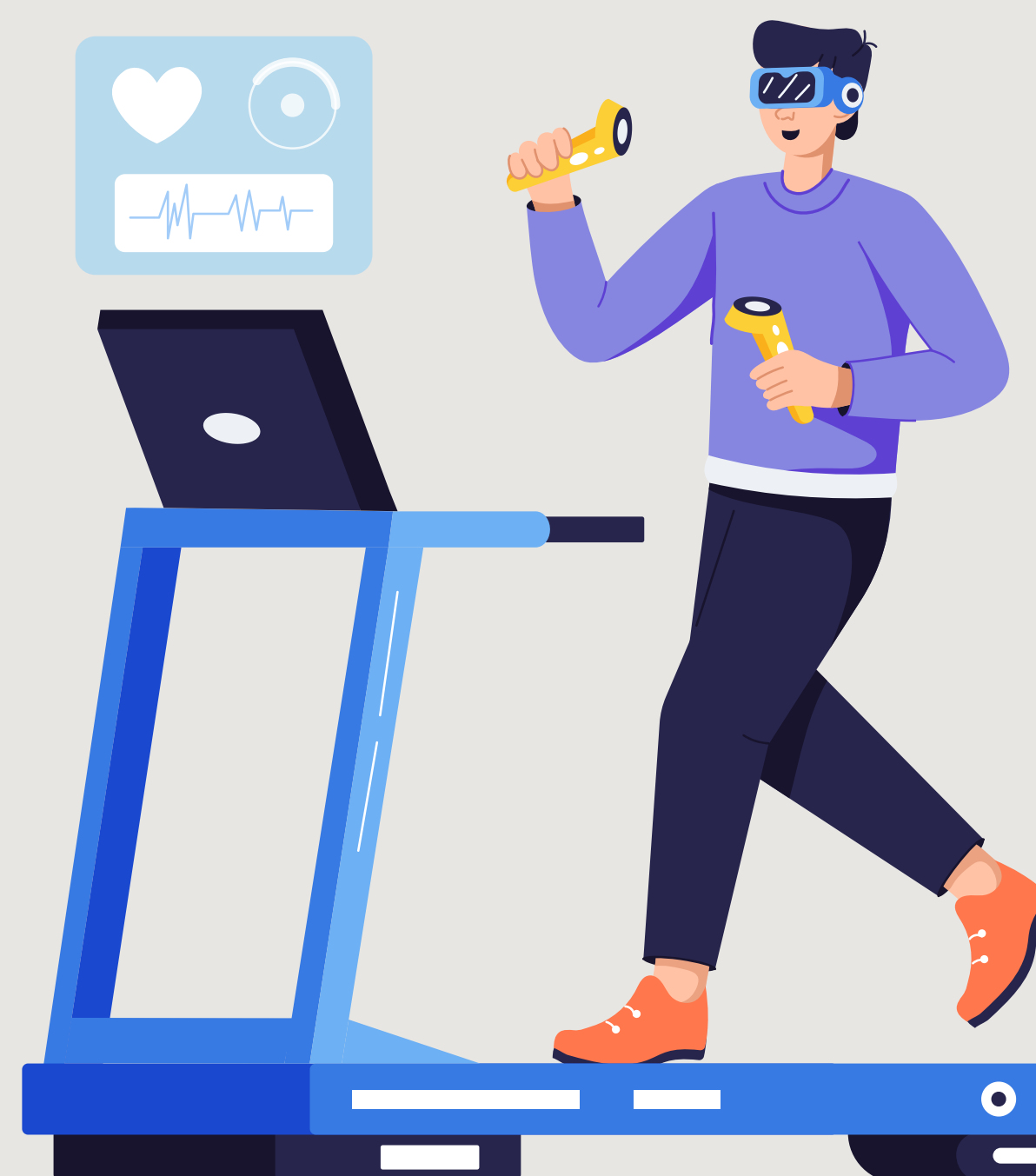
Physical activity isn't just good for the body, it's great for our minds as well. Studies have shown that physical exercise releases chemicals in our brains known as "feel-good" hormones. These hormones not only boost our confidence and self-esteem but also improve our sleep quality.

Other benefits include but are not limited to, less stress and mental fatigue, a natural energy and mood booster, a healthy appetite, a sense of achievement and more!

Being active in nature has also been proven to help reduce depression and anxiety and heighten a sense of life being worthwhile.

Being active doesn't just mean going to the gym

or running marathons, it could mean taking small walks every day, dancing, swimming, playing any sport or even following an online exercise video!







# Vitality: The Value of the Month

"Vitality shows in not only the ability to persist but the ability to start over" – F. Fitzgerald

Vitality is the inner strength that helps propel us towards our goals while facing numerous obstacles in life. As we focus on the new academic year, let's focus on how to cultivate vitality in our lives.

1

**Staying active:** Activities such as stretching, a short stroll through the park, or regular exercise can boost both physical and mental health, and mental clarity.

3

**Surround yourself in a positive environment:** Engage with people who inspire you and help you improve in your daily tasks, while distancing yourself from negative people.

2



**Nourishing our body with a healthy diet:** By eating properly, providing sufficient nutrients for our body, and getting enough rest are essential for cultivating good health and vitality.

**So, as we step into a new academic year, let's embrace vitality - move with focus, purpose and resilience.**


## Power of Habits:



Habits shape our daily lives and significantly influence our well-being. Whether good or bad, they drive our routines and determine our progress. Building positive habits isn't about making drastic changes overnight, it's about starting **small and staying consistent**.

One of the most powerful ways to develop good habits is to make them easy and rewarding. For instance, start with just five minutes of movement daily or keep your workout gear accessible to remove barriers. Remember, it's not about willpower, it's about making habits simple and sustainable.

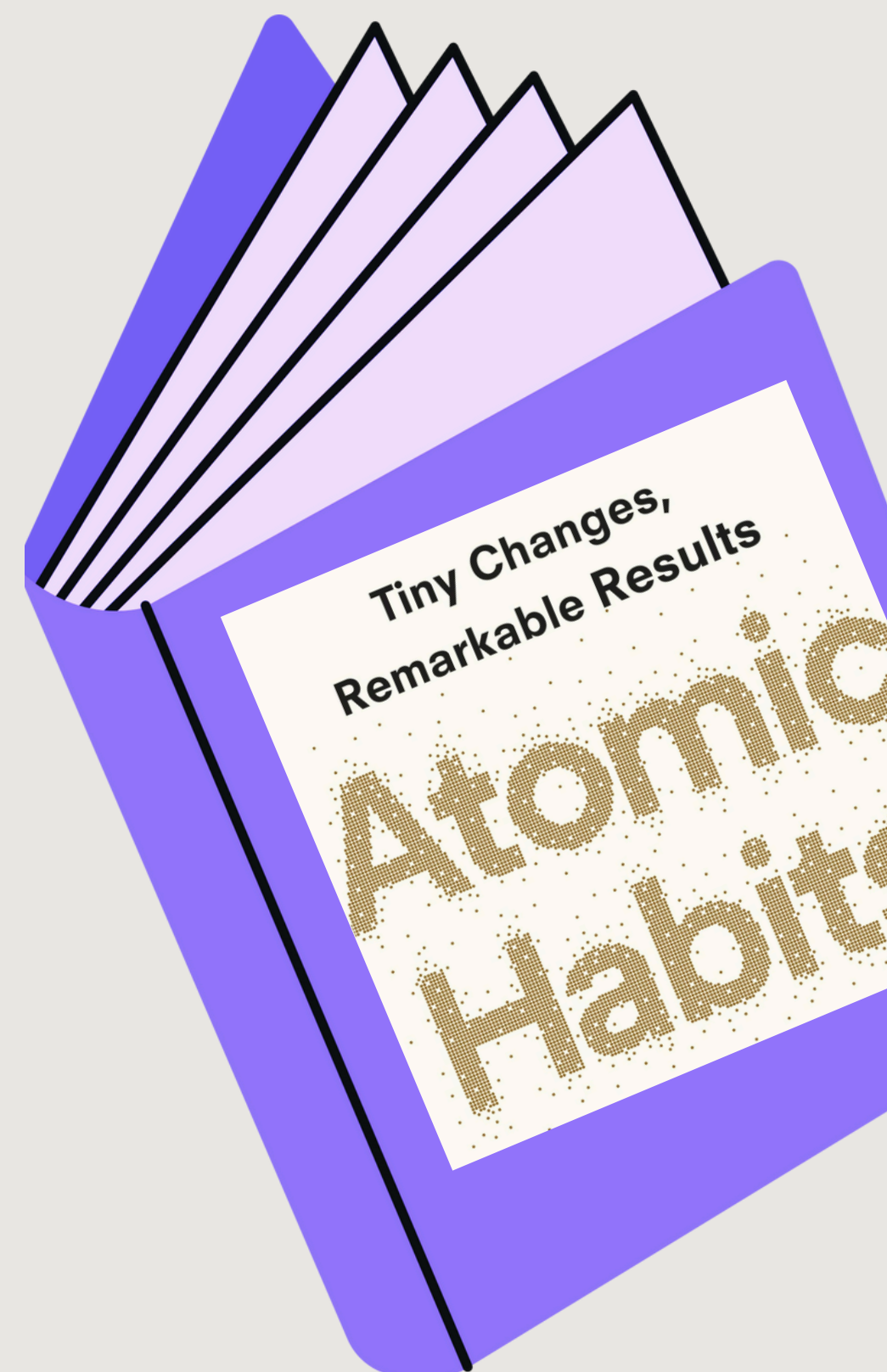


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- i) Start with an incredibly small habit
  - ii) Gradually make small improvements over time
  - iii) As you build up, break habits into chunks
  - iv) Bounce back quickly after setbacks

James Clear's **Atomic Habits** brilliantly captures the essence of building lasting habits through small, consistent changes.

He emphasizes that success is a result of everyday routines rather than one-time transformations.

The book offers practical strategies to **break bad habits** and develop positive ones, making self-improvement both accessible and achievable. If you're looking to transform your habits and mindset, give Atomic Habits a read you'll discover how tiny changes can lead to remarkable results.



## TIPS TO BREAK BAD HABITS:

- **Have a Plan:** Strategize how to replace bad habits with positive actions.
- **Identify Triggers:** Recognize the situations or emotions that lead to unwanted behaviors.
- **Replace with Positive Actions:** Swap harmful habits with constructive ones.
- **Surround Yourself with Positive Influences:** Be around people who inspire you to make good changes.
- **Visualize Your Success:** Imagine achieving your goals to stay motivated.
- **Find an Accountability Partner:** Team up with someone who supports your journey.
- **Track Your Progress:** Keep a journal to monitor your growth and reflect on your habits.
- **Keep It Simple and Sustainable:** Focus on building small, consistent routines that are easy to maintain.



# Setting Goals:

Tips to set realistic and achievable goals (Using the SMART goals framework)  
S.M.A.R.T goals are a structured approach to setting and achieving objectives effectively.

<b>S</b>	pecific – Define your goal (e.g., "I will walk 20 minutes daily and aim for 5,000 per day.")
<b>M</b>	easurable – Track progress (e.g., "I will count my steps.")
<b>A</b>	chievable – Keep it realistic. (e.g., "I will start with 15 minutes and increase gradually.")
<b>R</b>	levant – Align with well-being. (e.g., "Daily walks will help me reduce stress and improve focus.")
<b>T</b>	ime-bound – Set a deadline. (e.g., "I will achieve this within two months.")

## Journal Prompts on the Theme:

1) **Daily Activity Tracker** – Reflect on your daily movement. How can you incorporate more activity into your routine?

2) **Movement as a Habit** – What small, sustainable habit can you start this month to stay active? How will you track your progress?

3) **Overcoming Obstacles** – What are some challenges that prevent you from staying active? How can you overcome them?

4) **Energizing Morning Routines** – If you could create the perfect morning routine to energize your day, what would it include?

5) **Reflection at Month's End** – At the end of April, reflect on how staying active impacted your mood and energy levels. What worked well? What would you change?

## CREDITS

### Graphics:

- Jumaana Shabeer

### Editorial:

- Maira 12D
- Aarush 11K
- Aarav 11L
- Jiya 11E
- Aparna 12E

