

Balancing Act



Figure 1: A quiet high school running track at dusk, empty except for a pair of running shoes placed neatly beside a backpack and a closed textbook

Mika sat on the bleachers, phone buzzing with texts from friends heading to a party where someone's older brother was buying beer.

"You coming?" asked Dev, dropping beside her.

"I've got a physics test tomorrow, and I promised my mom I'd sleep properly this week," Mika said. "I keep saying yes to everything and I'm exhausted."

Dev shrugged. "One night won't kill you."

"Maybe not. But it's not just one thing. It's the test, the late nights, skipping runs, saying yes because everyone else is going."

She texted back: not tonight, early morning run planned.

Dev smiled. "Bring me next time? I need that balance too."

"Deal," Mika said, lacing up her shoes as the sun dropped low.

Words to know

- **Determinants of health:** Factors such as environment, relationships, and choices that shape a person's overall well-being
- **Holistic well-being:** The idea that physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual health are all connected
- **Peer pressure:** The influence of friends or peers on a person's decisions and behaviour

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