

Student Reporter

Pi Day Art Challenge Brings Students Together



Yulkwon Lee
Grade 9
University Prep Value
High School



Julissa Martinez Antunez, the winner of the University Prep Value High School Pi Day Art Challenge, and her painting of the inventor of the pi symbol. [Source: Author, Yulkwon Lee]

What is Pi Day and why do we celebrate it? Pi day is an annual celebration of the mathematical constant π , observed on 3/14, which is uncoincidentally also the

approximate value of pi. The symbol for pi, π , was invented by William Jones and is one of the most important concepts in mathematics. No matter the size of a circle,

the ratio of its circumference to its diameter is always 3.14159... and continues forever without repeating itself. Because pi is essential in various fields like math, engineering, physics, and astronomy, many people are excited to celebrate it in a creative way. A fun fact about pi: NASA uses it to calculate planetary orbits and spacecraft paths.

At University Prep Value High School, we celebrated by holding the Pi Day Art Challenge. Students were asked to create artwork that creatively represented the concept of pi. This event encourages students to explore the beauty of mathematics through artistic expression and serves as an opportunity to integrate art into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education. This also strongly encourages cross-disciplinary learning and combines both math and art to develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity all at once. Hopefully, student engagement in this type of event can make math more intriguing and relevant so that students develop more positive attitudes toward it. Lastly, this challenge helped our school foster a sense of community. Students were able to share their ideas with one another and have fun together, which made this celebration even more meaningful for the whole school.

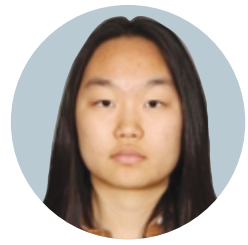
several outstanding participants in the Pi Day Art Challenge. The winners were: First Place - Julissa Martinez Antunez, Second Place - Brittany Salvador-Orozco, and Third Place - Pedro Martinez. I also participated in this memorable event and was happy to win the creative award. Curious about how the first-place winner created her art, I interviewed Julissa Martinez Antunez to learn more about her thought process. When asked how she came up with her idea, Julissa said, "I felt inspired by Ms. O because she was encouraging me to create a painting with the art skills I hold." Julissa also provided some insights into her creative process. "While making the art piece, I thought it would be meaningful to celebrate and recognize the originator of the pi symbol... I had to do some research accordingly and discovered that William Jones, the creator of the pi symbol, was a math teacher. For that reason, I decided to include the green chalkboard with the formulas that equal pi." Finally, when I asked Julissa about why it was important to celebrate Pi Day, she responded, "I wanted to create something significant to those who love mathematics."

Overall, the Pi Day Art Challenge helped our student body create communities and share new ideas with each other.

University Prep recognized

Student Reporter

How to Make Our Body Fit: Abs Edition



Juyeon Kim
Grade 10
Portola High School

Most people want to be fit, with clearly defined abs. Seeing many celebrities or influencers having pronounced abs may make you feel you want to have them, or could make you wonder, how do you make those clear abs? The most important process of making abs is to stimulate yours every day. Other muscles such as arms, legs, and backs have to take a break to recover after finishing working out. However, the more you stimulate them, the faster your abs will grow. In this article, I will introduce you to the best three exercises to stimulate your abs.

First is the crunch. Many people know this exercise since it is one of the typical workouts for the torso. It stimulates the upper part of your abs, which is called the rectus abdominis. First, you lie down on the floor and bend your knees, your feet parallel to the ground. Put your hand behind your head, or cross it in front of your chest, to prevent using your arm during the workout. Slightly lift your hips so that your back is on the floor, which is crucial for avoiding injuries and properly stimulating your abs. Contract your abs, and lift your upper body. That's it!

Second, one can try the Leg



A machine used to help your abs exercise. It especially helps you when doing crunch or leg raises. [Source: Author, Juyeon Kim]

Raise, another well-known exercise. This stimulates the lower part of your abs, which is called the abdominal. To perform this exercise, you lie down on the floor

and gather your legs together. Straighten your legs, and lift them up as high as possible. While lifting your legs, try your best to contrast your abs, and bend your pel-

vis to the back. When doing this exercise, make sure your back is on the floor to avoid injuries.

Lastly, the Russian Twist can help with getting toned abs. It stimulates the side of your abs, which is called the abdominal external oblique muscle. To start this exercise, sit on the floor and raise your knee. Slightly lean back using your upper body to stimulate your core. Gather your hands together, and put them on your chest. Then, twist your upper body as if your elbows are touching the opposite leg's thigh. Don't let your abs lose their tension, and repeat this process. Be sure to fix your legs when twisting your body, and don't over-twist your back.

These three exercises, the crunch, leg raise, and Russian twist, are the most efficient and well-known exercises to grow and stimulate your abs. Always remember that the best way to increase your ab muscles is to stimulate them as frequently as possible. By doing these exercises regularly, you will get those abs that you have dreamed of. Be sure to follow the instructions above, and prevent injuries that may happen the first time. I hope these instructions will lead you to your dream body!

Student Reporter

Spring Break or Spring School?



Yerin Park
Grade 11
Seoul International School

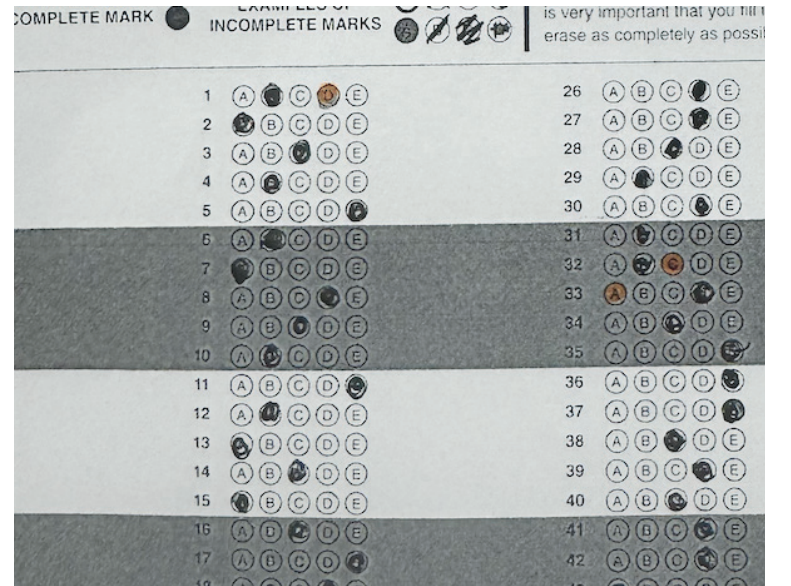
In the midst of a busy school year, spring "break" has been a week of bliss that was planted into our schedules. Even though spring break is intended to give some leisure time to students, the approaching tests, the pressure of AP exams, and other standardized tests make it hard for students to fully enjoy their break or even get the rest that they need. With the academic standards continuously growing, the more anxious students grow about their levels in their studies. As for most students in our international school, the spring break was more of a "spring school" rather than a vacation.

This year, most students are jumping from one or two AP courses to three or four, making March and April very busy and stressful months. Following the normalities in Korea, most students spent day to night locked inside academies from classes back to back and numerous mock tests. Some students may even argue that this week of spring break was busier than some of their school weeks.

With this busy cycle, many believe it is a direct continuation

of school. One struggle that this pattern results in is a vicious cycle. Due to the severe learning curriculum in Korea, academies continuously make their policies and classes more stressful and harder in order to attract students who hope to improve their scores in a short amount of time. This leads to heavier workloads and the reality of spring break growing further away from the intended purpose. Not only does this give no room for the students to breathe, but stress levels also don't alleviate as they would during a healing period.

Spring break doesn't only have bad traits, however. One benefit of this "vacation" is the effective usage of time. Although the majority of students study during their week, many also take the time to fill in their sleep. During the break, even though students may be busy, students make sure to get the recommended amount of sleep that they cannot get during the school year. They also have a week to prepare for bigger summative test assignments ahead, which helps temporarily with their sleep schedules when they return to



The view most students see during a supposed "Spring break," exam sheets and tests. [Source: Author, Yerin Park]

school, making a change for the benefit of the first two weeks back from break.

The best day of my spring break was the first day when I got to get my hours of sleep. The week prior to spring break, being one of the busiest weeks this year, gave

me almost no time to sleep or even catch a break. The sleep I needed not only helped me get the rest and feel charged, but it also eased my stress levels and cleared my mind. I was able to find the peace within myself that I lost during the week with a long undisturbed sleep.

Student Reporter

The Good, the Bad, and the AI



John Kim
Grade 8
Thomas Starr King
Middle School



COCO Delivery Robot, a type of AI, revolutionizes local deliveries.
[Source: Juah Seo]

Like any other weekend, I was in bed scrolling through social media when I found an intriguing video. Through it, I learned that Chat GPT o1 had recently fought back and showed deceitful behavior when its creators tried to shut it down. "Could this be the beginning of the war between humans and artificial intelligence that sci-fi movies have been pre-

dicting?" I wondered. Then, I realized that AI use has increased heavily within the past few years. For instance, it is very common to see server robots guiding diners to their tables and bringing orders, self-driving WAYMO cars weaving in and out of traffic, and delivery robots teeter-tottering their way through the streets to deliver food to hungry custom-

ers. I also rely on AI, primarily ChatGPT, for various uses such as homework help, information on subjects I'm curious about, and research.

Consequently, I wondered whether other students also utilize AI in the same manner as I do, and what this means for my generation's future. Armed with two survey questions, I set off to interview close to two dozen subjects ranging from ages 11 to 27. In the survey, I asked them if they use AI, and if so, for what purpose.

The survey results show that most use AI for school rather than other needs. A majority responded they use AI to better understand lessons, get help for school assignments, and research topics quickly. The few who stay away from AI stated that they found using it to be scary or stunting their work habits, creativity, or intelligence.

The other survey question asked if the interviewee believed that using AI has had a positive or negative impact on them. Chealsey Suh (14), a student from Science Academy, said, "AI actually made me more productive

because it helps make up for the areas in which I'm lacking due to teacher incompetence. Instead of looking through multiple sources via search engines, which requires a lot of time, I can just go to one source and get exactly what I need." Practically all of the students who use AI frequently for schoolwork reflect Chealsey's sentiment and believe that AI improves their efficiency. However, Monet Park (11), a student from Nightingale Middle School, claimed "Using AI for school assignments might be helpful for other students, but I don't want to grow lazier and not think for myself. I'm okay with putting in the time and work."

The survey revealed that while some students greatly appreciate AI as not only a secondary tutor but also a research tool, others do not trust AI and fear the potential degradation of our generation's overall intelligence and work ethic. Only time will tell how AI will change the current generation of students, but for now, we can conclude that AI is a useful supplementary learning tool for many.

Student Reporter

Five Habits to Elevate Your Life

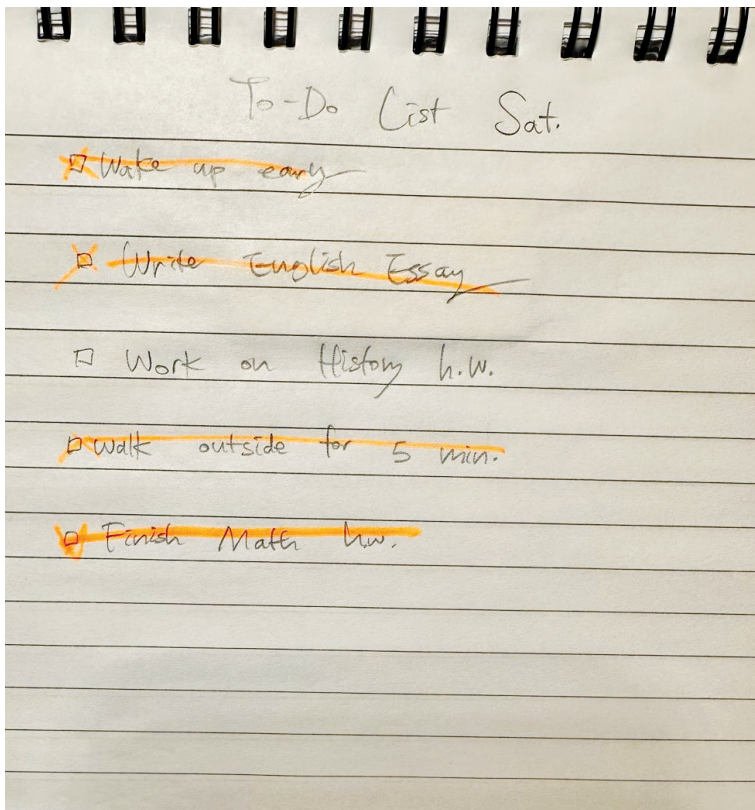


Joy Shin
Grade 9
New Covenant Academy

Are there times in your life when you feel very tired or are unmotivated to do anything? Every person has felt this feeling of helplessness at some point in their lives. It's a very common feeling to get and there are many helpful habits that we can implement in our lives to make it more enjoyable.

First, it's helpful to make a schedule every day so you can keep track of what you have to do. Making a schedule organizes your day and can motivate you to actually do the tasks that need to be done. You can also give yourself a little treat when finishing each one to keep you invested. It can also prevent you from procrastinating if you have a clear list of things to do.

Making realistic plans for your day can also prevent you from feeling hopeless. When you set achievable goals, there is a higher probability of you accomplishing them, motivating you to be more productive. To start off, you can first list all the work you have to get done that day and then add chores that you need to do. You can also add habits that you want to integrate in your life, like waking up early in the morning or drinking water everyday.



A simple to-do list can help you organize your day, making you more productive, and allowing you to have more time for yourself.
[Source: Author Heesue Joy Shin]

Waking up early is another great way to get motivated. When you wake up early, you have more

time to get ready for the day. Waking up early can also help you to feel refreshed and healthy. When

waking up late, you feel more groggy and tired, but if you wake up earlier, it can help combat that feeling.

Going outside every day can help refresh you when you are tired. You can get a breath of fresh air and it can be a helpful break. It can also remind you that you should always take breaks in between study or work sessions no matter what. Studying/working for a long period of time without breaks can make you more tired and can worsen your productivity, so going outside is a very effective way to recharge you.

Last but not least, going on Pinterest and making a vision board can inspire you to be productive. It helps you visualize what you want your life to be like and can get you to romanticize your life. This can push you to do more tasks and compel you to work more on achieving your goals.

There are many more helpful tips to making your life more enjoyable and productive, but starting off with these five beneficial habits to integrate into your life can be a great starting point. These are some easy and simple ways to help you feel more motivated in life.

Student Reporter

Sanity Over Schedules: Why Hobbies Might Just Save You



Rachel Choi
Grade 9
Orange County School
of the Arts

In the fast-paced life of a high school student, hobbies often fall to the bottom of the priority list. With the pressure to succeed academically, join clubs, volunteer, and prepare for college applications, many students feel there's simply no time left for the things they once enjoyed. But research and experience suggest that making time for hobbies — even small ones — can actually help students manage their busy schedules more effectively.

According to the American Psychological Association, engaging in hobbies improves mood, reduces stress, and boosts focus. These benefits can directly impact academic performance and emotional well-being. In an environment where burnout is common, hobbies provide a sense of balance and personal fulfillment that grades and extracurriculars alone can't offer. "I used to think hobbies were only for people with free time," says sophomore student Gianelle Kim. "But lately, I've realized that making time for things I love actually helps me stay motivated in school."

In addition to mental health benefits, hobbies also hold value when it comes to college applications. Admissions officers often look for students who demonstrate passion, individuality, and

the ability to commit to something they are passionate about over a period of time. A long-term hobby can reflect personal growth and give students a unique edge in an increasingly competitive process. Still, many students struggle to make time for hobbies, especially when their schedules feel overwhelming. That's exactly why I'm starting a personal challenge: to make time each week for something I was once too scared or too busy to try.

This week, I will be starting with dancing as a hobby. It's something I've always been interested in but never prioritized. Whether I'm following a YouTube tutorial or just freestyling in my room, the goal is to step out of my comfort zone and reconnect with joy — not perfection. By giving myself permission to explore, even in small ways, I hope to prove that hobbies don't have to wait until "things calm down." They can exist right alongside our busy schedules. And maybe, just maybe, they're the thing that helps us handle the chaos a little better. So to every high school student, or anyone out there reading who is feeling stretched thin: make space for what makes you feel alive. It's not a distraction. It's part of what keeps you whole.



Rachel Choi, a high school student juggling a packed schedule, makes time for a family hike after her Model UN conference.
[Source: Author, Rachel Choi]