ASICS RETURNS TO ITS ROOTS TO UPLIFT THE WORLD THROUGH SPORT

As the world faces the risk of a mental health pandemic, ASICS renews its commitment to move minds through sport

[13 JANUARY 2021 – KOBE, JAPAN] – As the world faces the risk of a mental health pandemic, ASICS today announces its renewed commitment to use the power of sport to uplift the world. In 2021 and beyond, ASICS will support more people to experience the transformative power of sport, not just on the body but on the mind. Through research and innovation, and by supporting projects that get people moving for positive physical and mental wellbeing, ASICS is committed to moving body and mind.

Moving Minds Since 1949
ASICS, an acronym of the Latin phrase Anima Sana In Corpore Sano or a Sound Mind in a Sound Body, has always believed in the positive impact of sport on the mind. ASICS’ founder, Kihachiro Onitsuka, saw that sport had the ability to bring hope and lift spirits in 1940’s Japan. Today, ASICS’ founding philosophy is perhaps more relevant than ever before. Which is why the company is returning to its roots and putting “Sound Mind, Sound Body!” at the core of its business.

Moving Minds Through Research and Innovation

Animas Sana In Corpore Sano, meaning “A Sound Mind in a Sound Body,” is an old Latin phrase from which ASICS is derived and the fundamental platform on which the brand still stands. The company was founded more than 60 years ago by Kihachiro Onitsuka and is now a leading designer and manufacturer of running shoes, as well as, other athletic footwear, apparel and accessories. For more information, visit www.asics.com.

The stripe design featured on the sides of the ASICS® shoes is a registered trademark of ASICS Corporation.
PRESS RELEASE

In 2021, ASICS will undertake a landmark research project into the positive impact of sport on mental wellbeing. It will use cutting-edge biometric technology to capture the true effect of sport on the minds of thousands of participants around the world.

Ahead of the research project’s full roll-out, ASICS has also conducted an initial feasibility study involving a group of elite athletes – including British Olympic runner and European Triathlon Champion Beth Potter – and everyday athletes as a basis for comparison.

Moving Minds Measured
Overseen by Dr. Brendon Stubbs, a leading exercise and mental health researcher based at King’s College, London, the study measured a series of brain pathways known to influence the emotional and cognitive elements of mental wellbeing. And it found that after a short amount of physical activity, the everyday athletes experienced an overall emotional uplift, including up to a 29% improvement in their ability to cope with stress and up to an 18% increase in their relaxation levels. They also reported a significant drop in negative emotions like frustration (up to 135%) and were up to 28% less prone to making rash decisions and reacting negatively to challenges or disruption.

When it comes to the brain pathways associated with cognitive performance, the everyday athletes again demonstrated a significant uplift after a brief amount of sport. This included up to a 26% increase in brain processing speed, up to a 21% improvement in memory and as much as a 58% reduction in their levels of cognitive stress, some of the symptoms of which are anxiety, forgetfulness and disorganisation.

Interestingly, both the emotional and cognitive uplifts were greater among the everyday athletes than among the elite ones.

Following this initial feasibility study, ASICS is continuing to conduct the experiment with both everyday and elite athletes. The findings of this research project will be used to develop future innovations that unlock the mental benefits of sport and exercise for athletes of all levels.

Moving Minds at Sunrise to Spread Positivity
From today, ASICS is coming together with its athletes – including Kiryu Yoshihide, Noëlle Roorda and Henri Shoeman, - to issue an open invitation to people around the world to join their mission to uplift the world. Using sunrise as a symbol of hope, ASICS is encouraging people everywhere to kick start the New Year by moving at sunrise to spread positivity, and raise awareness of the importance and impact sport has on the mind. From today,
hundreds of ASICS athletes, ambassadors and employees will move at sunrise. To get involved:

- Get up, get out and move at sunrise by going for a run, walk, or taking part in any sport or activity
- Take your sunrise selfie and upload to Instagram, Facebook or Twitter with #SoundMindSoundBody; or
- Take part in a Move With The Sun Challenge using the ASICS Runkeeper™ app; and
- Nominate up to three others to do the same and continue spreading the word
- ASICS will celebrate every image shared through local market initiatives around the world throughout January and February 2021

Dr. Brendon Stubbs, a leading exercise & mental health researcher, based at King’s College London says: “It is impossible to overstate just how significant the impact sport and exercise have on our mind. It’s absolutely vital that people regularly move their body to experience those all-important cognitive and emotional benefits for themselves. Never has there been a more important time to become active and experience the mental health benefits sport and movement bring.”

[President & Chief Operating Officer of ASICS Yasuhiro Hirota] said, “We know COVID-19 has put even more pressure on the wellbeing of millions of people. We also know and believe that sport and movement can lift spirits and help people feel better. For us, 2021 is about unlocking the unique power of sport to uplift our minds. That starts with encouraging people everywhere to move with us at Sunrise and will continue throughout the year as we demonstrate our commitments to our founding philosophy of a sound mind, sound body.”

ASICS has also released a special Sunrise Red Collection designed to move body and mind. The Sunrise Red Collection features key ASICS styles - including GEL-NIMBUS™ 23, GEL-KAYANO™ 27, NOVABLAST™ and GEL-QUANTUM™ 360 – all in the striking Sunrise Red colorway to spread positivity through movement.

Get Involved
For more information or to take part, visit ASICS.com and follow @ASICS.

-ENDS-
NOTES FOR EDITORS

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH
ASICS is undertaking a live experiment to advance its understanding of sport’s impact on the mind. Developed in collaboration with neuroinformatic company EMOTIV, and leading exercise and mental health researcher Dr. Brendon Stubbs, the experiment employs Advance EEG technology to chart the difference in an individual’s cognitive and emotional reactions pre- and post- exercise across six primary metrics – interest, excitement, frustration, relaxation, cognitive stress and focus.

On completion of the experiment, an individual’s neurobiological data is interpreted through validated machine learning algorithms to produce a summary report and series of mind map visuals, detailing in an objective way the positive impact of exercise on their cognitive and emotional brain pathway responses.

Taking place between 1st December 2020 and Friday 7th January 2021, the experiment has been conducted on an initial research group of seven people. This group includes three elite and a control group of four non-elite athletes.