

BRAIN BREAKS

50+ Classroom Energizers

For Active Learning
& Relaxation



Move

Engage

Learn

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All Movement Counts

**Hey Teachers!
Let's get your classes moving!**

This resource provides suggestions for short activity breaks in the classroom. With movement, your students will LEARN better, RETAIN more and FEEL better. This book is organized into the following categories:

Group Energizers

Yoga & Relaxation

Video Resources

Movement Library

Help our kids reach the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Use this book as you see fit and be a role model for your students! Remember, ALL movement counts!



Underline = clickable link to source

[Bracketed bit.ly link] = type into browser

GROUP ENERGIZERS



True/False

1. Prepare a list of true/false questions to test students on class content.
2. Arrange students' chairs in a circle.
3. Read the question aloud while students walk around the chairs and determine if the answer is true or false.
4. If the answer is **true**, instruct students to find a chair and sit down. If the answer is **false**, instruct students to perform a physical activity such as knee to elbow touches, jumping jacks or hopping in place.



Source: [American Heart Association](https://www.heart.org)
[bit.ly/AHATrueFalse]

Heart Smart

1. Teacher will discuss the heart:
 - Where is it located? Left side of the chest.
 - What size is it? Size of a fist.
 - Function? Deliver blood to the body.
 - What strengthens the heart? Jumping, swimming, jogging. (Students will act out each activity)
 - What weakens the heart? Inactivity, smoking, unhealthy diet.
2. Teacher calls out a habit that strengthens or weakens the heart.
3. If the habit strengthens the heart, students will respond by jumping for 15 seconds.
4. If the habit weakens the heart, students will respond by falling down or squatting for 5 seconds.

STRENGTHENS:

- ★ Riding a bike
- ★ Walking your dog
- ★ Dancing with your friends
- ★ Skating
- ★ Riding a scooter
- ★ Raking the leaves
- ★ Washing the car
- ★ Taking the stairs
- ★ Swimming
- ★ Shooting hoops

WEAKENS:

- ★ Eating 4 pepperoni pizzas
- ★ Smoking cigarettes
- ★ Never going outside to play
- ★ Watching TV all the time
- ★ Playing video games
- ★ Eating fast food
- ★ Never eating fruits and vegetables
- ★ Taking the elevator
- ★ Eating french fries and cupcakes



Source: [Eat Smart Move More North Carolina](http://bit.ly/EatSmartNC)
[bit.ly/EatSmartNC]

Frozen Vocab

1. Instruct students to do an activity standing at their desks:
 - ★ Jumping
 - ★ Twisting
 - ★ Jogging
 - ★ Jumping jacks
 - ★ Playing air guitar
2. Students continue activity for 30 seconds or until teacher calls out a vocabulary word at which point the students freeze.
3. Call on a volunteer to use the vocabulary word properly in a sentence.
4. Resume activity or begin a new activity when a student uses the vocabulary word properly in a sentence.



Source: [Eat Smart Move More North Carolina](http://bit.ly/EatSmartNC)
[bit.ly/EatSmartNC]

State Exploration

1. Teacher leads the class on a virtual tour of a state or country (e.g., California). Students move at least 30 seconds for each of the actions listed below.
 - ★ March across the Golden Gate Bridge
 - ★ Surf in the Pacific Ocean
 - ★ Climb up a Redwood Tree
 - ★ Pretend you are an actor and wave to all your fans
 - ★ Flex your muscles like Arnold Schwarzenegger, the former governor
 - ★ Stomp the grapes
 - ★ Pick oranges
 - ★ In-line skate on the boardwalk
 - ★ Ski on the Sierra Nevadas
 - ★ Climb Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the continental US
 - ★ Crawl through the Death Valley Desert
 - ★ Hit a home run at Pac-Bell Park
 - ★ Shoot a foul shot at the Staples Center
2. Teacher may use same concept with any state/ country and/or use a map for visual representation.



Source: [Eat Smart Move More North Carolina](http://bit.ly/EatSmartNC)
[bit.ly/EatSmartNC]

Dance Freeze

SET UP: need music and player
(phone, tablet, computer, etc.)

1. Designate an open area free of obstacles. If objects are present that cannot be moved, point them out and remind everyone that they must be careful not to touch another person or object.
2. Have the radio or music player ready with an appropriate station or music selection.
3. Start the music. While music is playing, everyone dances or moves how they like. When the music stops, each player must freeze immediately and hold that position until the music begins again.
4. If a player does not freeze immediately, s/he does 10 jumping jacks (or exercise of choice) during the start of the next round and then rejoins the dance.
5. Since this is an aerobic game, it is better for players to try to stay in the game and not get “out.”



Source: [Playworks](https://bit.ly/PlayworksDanceFreeze)
[bit.ly/PlayworksDanceFreeze]

Chi Master

1. Practice the call and response of “I am the Chi Master” with them responding “You are the Chi Master.” Introduce 3 different movements (e.g., Chi Master Salutation (bow), The Crane and The Sonic Boom - see video source for reference).
2. Form a semi-circle of students standing 1 foot apart, with the Chi Master at the front, facing the students.
3. Begin the round with the adult saying, “I am the Chi Master!” and students respond “You are the Chi Master!”
 - Adult then counts 1...2...3!
 - On 3, students pick one of the 3 predetermined movements to show (Chi Master Salutation, The Crane or the Sonic Boom).
 - The adult also picks any one of the 3 motions to show.
4. If the students do the same motion as the adult, they have to perform an exercise (e.g., 5 jumping jacks, 2 squats, etc.). The object for the students is to **NOT** do what the adult does.



Source with Video: [Playworks](https://www.playworks.org/chi-master)

[bit.ly/PlayworksChiMaster]

Trading Places

1. Students stand at their desks, chairs pushed in.
2. Call out a trait. Everyone who has that trait must trade places with another person who has that trait (students who don't have the trait stay at their desks).
3. Repeat with a different trait.
4. Variation: Students do a physical activity while standing at their desks until the teacher calls out a trait. Activities could include high knees, jumping jacks, arm circles, cherry pickers, toe touches, etc.

Ideas for traits:

- Everyone with curly hair
- Everyone wearing stripes
- Everyone who ate breakfast at school today
- Everyone wearing red
- Everyone who likes broccoli
- Everyone who has a dog
- Everyone who likes to ride a bike
- Everyone who walked to school today
- Everyone who has a garden at home
- Everyone who read a book at home yesterday
- What other traits can you come up with?



Source: Rachel Lynette, Minds In Bloom
[<https://bit.ly/2mHvr3T>]

Rock Paper Scissors Fan Club

Students will need a partner, and ensure there is enough room to move around the room safely.

- 1.** Once students have a partner, students will complete their first game of rock, paper, scissors.
- 2.** Determine a winner. The player who lost the first round will stay with the partner who won as his/her fan club member cheering, chanting and rooting for their partner.
- 3.** Find another pair of partners to play against and determine a winner. The pair of the team who lost the round will now join the winner as their fan club members. As the fan club grows, your group of four will now find another group of four and repeat the process with the three fan club members and the one rock, paper, scissors player.
- 4.** Continue the game until there are only two remaining players left (with two large fan clubs). Have the two players face off against the other team to take the overall championship/winner status.

Option: use feet motions: rock = feet together, paper = feet apart, scissors = one foot “split” in front and one foot behind hip.

Source: Des Moines Public Schools

Alive with Five

1. Play USDA's Alive with Five Song.
2. Select an action when students hear the words - "five," "fruits," "vegetable," "grain," "dairy" and "protein." For example, when they hear "five" they put five fingers up for a high five, when they hear "fruits" they jump, etc.
3. Write action words on the board. To start, all words can be the same action and then add more actions to make it challenging!



Source for song: [USDA Team Nutrition](https://www.usda.gov/team-nutrition)
[bit.ly/2nMMhRF]

Exercise Your Name

Each letter of the alphabet represents a physical activity. First demonstrate each activity, allowing the students a chance to practice. Then ask the students to spell their name by performing the activities.

Variation: as a class, spell a word(s) together.

- A, I, Q, Y:** 5 jumping jacks
- B, J, R, Z:** 5 squats
- C, K, S:** 10 second jog
- D, L, T:** 6 knee high touches
- E, M, U:** 5 toe touch stretches
- F, N, V:** 5 hula swings
- G, O, W:** 3 neck stretches
- H, P, X:** 5 second tree pose

Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach SWITCH program and the Earlham SWITCH Ambassadors

Shakedown

Explain to students that they will need to remember two details.

- First, they need to remember “**5-4-3-2-1.**”
- Second, students need to remember “**hand, hand, foot, foot.**” Demonstrate this by shaking one hand, then the other. Then kick out one foot, then the other. Explain to students that they will combine these two things.

Lead students in the “Shakedown.”

- Shake one hand five times, counting out loud “**5-4-3-2-1.**” Repeat with other hand.
- Then, kick out one foot five times, counting down “**5-4-3-2-1.**” Repeat with the other foot.
- Repeat all the motions again, counting down from **4** times, then **3**, then **2**, then **1**.

You may want to only count down from **3** for younger students and repeat the activity a couple of times.

Source: FoodCorps Iowa

Team Challenge

- 1.** Create two or more teams (or allow students to compete individually). Use Phase 10 cards or a regular deck of cards. These instructions are based on Phase 10 cards, but could be substituted with spades, diamonds, hearts or clubs.
- 2.** Assign a movement to each color of the cards.
 - Red = high knees
 - Blue = side steps
 - Green = arm circles
 - Yellow = cherry pickers
- 3.** Draw a card from the deck. Each team completes the movement based on the color of the card and the number on the card. (Example: 5 red = 5 high knees)
- 4.** When the team completes the movement, each player sits down. The first team to sit is awarded the card. The first team to earn five cards wins.



Source: HyVee KidsFit
[<https://bit.ly/2YE6uaq>]

YOGA & RELAXATION BREAKS

Yoga & Relaxation



Camping/Nature Yoga

Talk with the class about spending time outdoors camping or hiking. Look at a book or photos if you need a visual. What supplies would you need? Where would you go? What would you see?

Lead the students in yoga poses to represent a camping/hiking trip.

Tent pose (downward-facing dog): Hands and feet on the floor/hips pushed back towards the sky/body in an inverted “V” shape.

Tree pose: Stand on one leg. Lift the other leg and press your foot into the inside of your standing leg. Arms can go overhead. Practice on both sides.

Rock pose: Legs underneath you/shins down/torso over legs/arms next to you.

Bug pose: Lay on your back with arms and legs bent.

Roasting s’mores pose: Sit cross-legged, arms extended out forward.

Boat pose: Sit with legs bent and extended; heels touch ground or lifted. Lean back until you start to feel a shake in core muscles; extend your arms.

Variation: Make a forest of trees by joining hands while standing in tree pose. Or, join two tents together for a partner tent.

Source: Kate Virgil, Power Life Yoga

Green Eggs & Ham Yoga

Read “Green Eggs and Ham” by Dr. Seuss, or just point out the rhyming words, made-up words and funny pictures.

Breathwork: Hold a plate of green eggs and ham in your hands. Blow on them to cool them off. Inhale through your nose; big exhale out your mouth. Blow on the green eggs and ham 3-4 times to get your brain ready for the yoga poses.

Introduce yoga poses below or have students make up their own poses to go with the story.

- Would you eat them in a boat? (boat pose)
- With a goat? (spinal balance)
- With a mouse? (child’s pose)
- In a house? (downward dog)
- On a plane? (chair with airplane)?
- On a train (plank)

If you don’t know how to do the poses, find images online. Or, make them up! There’s no wrong way to do yoga.

Source: Kate Virgil, Power Life Yoga

Pajama Party Yoga

Get ready to feel relaxed and refreshed after some Pajama Party Yoga!

Breathwork: Lay on your back and start with 5-finger breathing. Hold up one hand. Using your pointer finger on the other hand, slowly trace each finger. As you trace up your finger, breath in; as you trace down, breathe out. Trace your hand 2-3 times depending on time.

Talk with students about what they might do as they get ready to sleep. Change yoga poses with each step. Use the poses below or have students think of their own.

- Count the stars. (star pose)
- Pull the sheets forward. (chair pose and reach back)
- Meditate or pray. (sit cross-legged, hands at heart, eyes closed)
- Stretch out. (forward fold over straight legs)
- Go to sleep. (child's pose)
- Wake up. (mountain pose)

Source: Kate Virgil, Power Life Yoga

Monarch Migration Yoga

Breathwork: Dry your wings (as you breathe in, sweep arms up overhead; as you exhale, bring arms down by your side). Complete a few rounds to prepare your body.

Monarch Migration Poses:

- Egg (child's pose with arms behind)
- Larvae (downward-facing dog)
- Pupa (dancer's pose)
- Butterfly (star pose); let your wings dry (raise and lower arms in star pose)
- Flight to Mexico (warrior II pose to extended side angle)

Game: One student is the "Butterfly Master" and calls out a pose. Other students hold the pose until the Butterfly Master says "release." Take turns having students be the butterfly master.

Source: Kate Virgil, Power Life Yoga

Walk Stop Wiggle Sit

Get students moving while you increase awareness and sharpen focus!

1. Repeat after me: **“When I hear ‘walk’ I will walk. When I hear ‘stop’ I will stop.”** Set boundaries for students and give commands to walk or stop.
2. Once they catch on to the game, have them repeat, **“When I hear ‘wiggle’ I will wiggle. When I hear ‘sit’ I will sit.”** Continue the game with commands walk, stop, wiggle or sit. Start slow, and then give commands faster with less time to pause and think.
3. Mix it up - After a few rounds or perhaps at a future session, increase the difficulty saying, **“When I hear ‘walk’ I will stop. When I hear ‘stop’ I will walk.”**
4. Later add, **“When I hear ‘wiggle’ I will sit. When I hear ‘sit’ I will wiggle.”**

Reflection: What was the easiest round of this game? The most challenging? How did the speed of the commands affect success? What were you thinking about while you played? What lessons can you take away from the game? What did you learn about focus?



Source: Next Step Adventure
[<https://bit.ly/2WRcoDO>]

Mirror Mirror

1. Students form pairs or small groups. One person starts as the leader. The leader chooses a pose and demonstrates it to the others.
2. The other players copy the leader's pose as if they are looking into a mirror.
3. Change the leader with each round of poses, so that everyone has a turn at being the leader.



Source: Marlynn Wei, MD, JD,
Harvard Medical School
[bit.ly/HarvardMedYoga]

Here are five easy yoga moves to get you started.



Source: Healthiest State Initiative
[<https://bit.ly/2WsKrQ3>]

Red Light, Green Light

1. One student is chosen as the Stoplight. He or she stands at the front of the room. The other students are the “cars” and they start at the opposite wall.
2. The Stoplight starts the game by calling “Green light!” The other players then use yoga poses to move forward.
3. When the Stoplight calls “Red light!,” each player needs to be in a yoga pose and remain still.
4. Students take turns being the Stoplight.

Options for taking turns: teacher’s discretion, or whoever reaches the front of the room first.



Source: Marlynn Wei, MD, JD,
Harvard Medical School
[bit.ly/HarvardMedYoga]

Yogi Says

Play this game just like Simon Says but with Yoga poses.

1. One student is selected as the Yogi.
2. The other students must do the yoga poses that the Yogi tells them to do if the instruction starts with “Yogi says.” If the Yogi doesn’t use “Yogi says,” then players do not do the pose.
3. Keep changing the student who is the Yogi.



Source: Marlynn Wei, MD, JD,
Harvard Medical School
[bit.ly/HarvardMedYoga]

Yoga for Kids

This resource provides simple yoga exercises that can be performed in a variety of settings. Includes descriptions and pictures of common yoga poses.



Source: University of Arkansas
[bit.ly/2Xj0ILM]

Meditation

Meditation can be short and simple, and does not have to involve complex yoga poses or staying still in a quiet, dark room.

Here are a few simple meditations for children, which can be done for as little as 30 seconds or for several minutes.

Mindful awareness meditation

- 1.** Find a comfortable seated position or lie down.
- 2.** Close your eyes.
- 3.** Try to listen to every single sound in the room.

Loving kindness meditation

- 1.** Find a comfortable seated position or lie down.
- 2.** Close your eyes and think about someone you love.
- 3.** Hold them tight in your heart and continue to think about that person.



Source: Marlynn Wei, MD, JD,
Harvard Medical School
[bit.ly/HarvardMedYoga]

Smiling Mind App:

This is another great resource for guided classroom meditation and mindfulness.



Source: Download here
[bit.ly/SmilingMindApp]

Fruit & Veggie Yoga

The teacher will say a fruit or vegetable, and students will do a yoga pose that represents how the food grows. The four options are:

- Tree pose (if grows on a tree)
- Warrior II (if grows on a bush)
- Down dog (if grows on a plant/vine)
- Up dog (if grows underground)

Before the activity, demonstrate each of the four poses with the children following along. (Search online for a description or image of the pose if unfamiliar with it.)

Variation: Children create their own poses. For example, an apple may be a round shape made with their body.

Tree	Bush	Plant/Vine	Underground
apple	raspberry	cantaloupe	carrot
orange	blueberry	tomato	potato
avocado	blackberry	watermelon	sweet potato
peach	cranberry	strawberry	radish
cherry	gooseberry	broccoli	beet
pear		spinach	onion
plum		peas	turnip
mango		pepper	jicama

Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach SWITCH Program

VIDEO RESOURCES



Group Games

GoNoodle [gonoodle.com]

Just Dance Kids [[YouTube](#)]

Playworks

[I Love My Neighbor](#) [bit.ly/ILoveMyNeighbor]

Responsive Classroom

[Go Bananas!](#) [bit.ly/GoBananasEnergizer]

[People to People](#) [bit.ly/PeopletoPeopleEnergizer]

Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction

[Classroom Yoga](#) [bit.ly/WIClassroomYoga]

Decorah Public Schools

[Standing Classroom Yoga](#) [bit.ly/DCSDStandingYoga]

[Seated Classroom Yoga](#) [bit.ly/DCSDFloorYoga]

[Desk Classroom Yoga](#) [bit.ly/DCSDDeskYoga]

Wisconsin Dairy Council

[Fuel Up to Play 60 Brain Break Videos](#) [bit.ly/2Hpoq1t]

[Moo Cow Dance](#) [bit.ly/2Q14iXp]

Partner Exercises

Hy-Vee KidsFit Program

Partner Plank Hop Overs [bit.ly/HyveeHopOvers]

Squat High Fives [<https://bit.ly/2HjFiqH>]

Plank High Fives [bit.ly/HyveeHighFives]

Partner Seated Twists [bit.ly/HyveeSeatedTwists]

Playworks

Back to Back Get Ups [bit.ly/PlayworksGetUp]

GoNoodle

Triangle Dance [bit.ly/2JBkYDL]

MOVEMENT LIBRARY



Pick & Choose!

Quarter Turns

While performing “quick feet,” jump slightly and rotate both feet to the right, return to center. Quick feet, jump slightly and land with both feet rotated to the left.

Butt Kickers

Start with a light jog. Then, kick your heels behind you to touch your buttocks with the bottom of your foot.

Heel Walks

Lift toes and balls of the feet and walk only on your heels.

Carioca (Grapevine)

Stay on the balls of your feet with your hips in a low semi-squat position. Twist your hips and cross one leg in front of the other, bringing your trail leg through and cross your lead leg behind the trail leg. Shoulders remain square.

Hip Twists

On the balls of your feet, jump and rotate hips to one side, keeping torso facing front. Alternate rotations quickly.

Skaters (or Speed Skaters)

Hop side to side (or moving forward) like an ice skater, pushing off with one foot, landing with the other, and bringing the trail leg behind. Option to alternate quickly.

Star Jumps

Start in a squat position and explode up in a jump, extending arms and legs out to side to form a star with your body.

Pick & Choose!

Toe Taps

Hop in place, alternating tapping one foot in front of you. Option to tap feet to an object or to chair.

Crab Toe Touches

Sit with your knees bent and feet flat on the ground; place palms on the ground behind you. Lift hips a few inches. Now lift left leg and right arm and try to touch your toes. Lower and repeat on the other side.

Inchworms

Start in a plank position and walk your feet to your hands, keeping your legs straight. Then walk hands out away from feet back into a plank. Either reverse the move if limited space, or keep moving forward if space allows.

Squat Jump High Fives

Pick a partner and each performs one squat jump. On the way up, reach for the partner's hand and give them a high five.

Mountain Climbers (Standing or in Plank)

PLANK - in a plank position keeping hands still, alternate bringing knees into chest quickly.

STANDING - perform high knees (stepping or jumping) and alternate raising the opposite arm as if climbing vertically.



Source: Alliance for a Healthier Generation

[bit.ly/AAHGFitnessBreaks]

