



MOVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Study after study shows kids who get regular physical activity experience improvements not just in their fitness levels, but in brain function, too. Classroom movement activates the brain, improves on-task behavior and leaves students more focused and ready to learn. There are many fun and creative ways to incorporate movement into the daily schedule, and many resources are available to help schools get started.

Classroom Activity Breaks

There are many names for physical activity breaks such as brain breaks, energizers, and brain boosters. Regardless of what you call it, the goal is simple! Get kids out of their seat and physically active throughout the school day. And don't forget to have fun!

- Brain breaks are quick exercises that can last a minute or more. Some are specifically designed to cross the body's midline, which helps to engage both sides of the brain. Brain Gym and Energizing Brain Breaks are good resources.
- Breathing, stretching and short yoga exercises have been shown to have many benefits for kids in school. They can calm and clear the mind, relieve tension and stress and increase concentration, focus and attention span.¹
- Physical activity can also be linked to specific academic content learning.² Teachers can have students practice spelling or vocabulary words while walking around the room. Or play a game of charades based on a topic the class is studying. Active Academics and Take 10 are good resources.

For Middle and High School Students

- Implement fitness breaks during homeroom or the advisory period.
- Involve students in creating, planning and leading their own activity breaks.

More Ideas

- Use fitness alarms. Ring the bell and have the entire school drop everything for a fitness break.
- Ask teachers to take "Walk and Talk" breaks — the class goes for a walk and discusses the lesson along the way.
- Have the PE teacher or other school staff lead fitness breaks during morning announcements.
- Use music to get kids moving more in the classroom, in the hallways during transitions and during lunch. Use music and videos that appeal to the targeted age groups.

Music is Key
Music is a powerful tool. At East Grand School District in Granby, Colorado you might see students dancing to music during transitions or movement breaks, special education classes doing ball exercises with music and music setting the tone of the day or being used to introduce a lesson theme.³

^{1,2,3}See ActionforHealthyKids.org/References



Tips for Success

- **Involve your physical education teacher.** They can teach students activities during PE class that they can do in the classroom. This empowers students and helps teachers feel more comfortable implementing activity breaks.
- **Ask students to share their physical activity break ideas.** As students get comfortable doing physical activity breaks, ask them to lead the activity. Classroom teachers should be given choices as to which materials they will try with their students. Demonstrate these choices during staff meetings to help them become comfortable. Add physical activity breaks right into your daily schedule. This helps to ensure you take breaks regularly. Use a classroom physical activity tracker to help your students reach 10 minutes daily.

GoNoodle

GoNoodle gets kids moving to be their smartest, strongest, silliest, best selves. Short, interactive movement videos and games make it simple and fun to incorporate movement into every part of the day with dancing, stretching, running and mindfulness activities. At school, teachers use GoNoodle to keep students active inside the classroom. At home, GoNoodle turns screen time into active time, so families have more fun and get moving together.



PARENT ADVOCATE

Shannon Ratliff felt that Brain Breaks should be a routine part of the day at South Lakewood Elementary in Colorado. With a grant from Action for Healthy Kids, Shannon provided each teacher with a box of props, laminated training cards and a Smart Board application for the entire school to use. Shannon held a training class, implemented a program to track progress and created incentives for them to reach their goals. Teachers and students love the program.

Resources

Action for Healthy Kids Game On Activities

actionforhealthykids.org/game-on-activity-library

Active Learning Opportunities, Classroom Physical Activity Breaks, Brain Breaks for Testing

Go Noodle: gonoodle.com

Energizing Brain Breaks: energizingbrainbreaks.com

Brain Gym: braingym.org

My School in Motion: myschoolinmotion.org

Yoga Foster: yogafoster.org

Yoga Health Foundation: yogahealthfoundation.org

Yoga 4 Classrooms: yoga4classrooms.com

Yoga Kids: yogakids.com

Content Learning with Movement

Active Academics: activeacademics.org

Take 10!: take10.net

For Secondary Students

Colorado Education Initiative, "Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox-

Physical Activity Breaks in the Secondary Classroom": <http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CEI-Take-a-Break-Teacher-Toolbox.pdf>



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