IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITY BREAKS

Physical Activity Breaks: These 3-5 minute physical activity ideas can be incorporated into any classroom. Here are some examples of how to get your students moving. Feel free to get creative and come up with your own!

Coaching Tips:
- Let students know that you expect everyone to participate to the best of their ability.
- Use start and stop signals.
- Use appropriate music, if possible.
- Keep the classroom safe—have students keep a safe distance from furniture and classmates.
- Show your enthusiasm for physical activity: participate cheerfully!
- Be persistent! Middle school students may be reluctant to participate at first.
- After the activity, settle students by asking them to do a standing pretzel. Cross left ankle over right. Extend arms and cross left wrist over right. Bring palms together and interlace fingers. Now bring hands up toward chin. Stand quietly for 30 seconds with eyes closed and tongue on the roof of mouth.

1 Football Captain in Charge: Choose a student volunteer to start leading a physical activity by his/her desk. After 20 seconds, the Captain chooses another leader. Students can be creative or use basic activities such as jumping jacks, marching in place, etc.

2 Rock, Paper, Scissors with Legs: Students play a traditional game of Rock, Paper, Scissors with their feet. Jump 3 times with feet together and then choose position: rock = feet together; paper = feet apart; scissors = one foot forward/one foot back. Students play best out of three with a classmate and then find a new partner to challenge.

3 Referee Makes the Call: The teacher calls out a movement slowly at first and then speeds up, varying the order and length of activity. Suggestions for activities are: seat kicks, high knees, quick steps, 1/4 turn in place, 1/2 turn in place.

4 Day at the Stadium: Act like you are going to an NFL Stadium without having to leave the classroom! Get out of your car, walk through the turnstile, walk up stadium steps, squat at seat, team scores—signal touchdown and jump up and down, give 5 people a “high 5” since you won the game, walk down the stadium steps, walk through the parking lot, get back into your car. Repeat activity.

5 Stadium Seat Moves: Students do the following moves while seated in their chair: the rumble (stomp feet on floor as quickly as possible), pretend to throw 5 penalty flags, YMCA (make letters with arms), shoulder shrugs, extend legs in front, pass popcorn down the row, wave at the camera with both arms, nervous fan (cross one ankle over the opposite knee, alternate 10 times).
6 **Yoga Positions:** Have students stand.
   a. **Warrior 1**—Legs start together. Take one step back. Bend front knee. Extend arms above the head with palms facing up. Hold for 20 counts. Switch legs.
   b. **Warrior 2**—Legs are straddled wide. Point left toes forward and right toes to the right. Lunge toward right foot. Extend arms into a T position. Hold for 20 counts. Switch legs.
   c. **Warrior 3**—Legs start together. Bend over from the waist. Extend one leg behind, no higher than waist level. Arms are to the side or over the head. Object is to have the body horizontal to the floor while balancing on one leg. Hold for 20 counts. Switch legs.

7 **Everybody Jump!** Have students practice learning how to jump rope. Each student should take one big step away from their desk. Students should imagine they have an imaginary jump rope in their hands. They should start with 50 revolutions and then once they get the hang of it, increase jumps by 50 the next time you do this activity. Students can practice with real jump ropes if they have them at home.

8 **Jump Rope Tricks:** Pretend to perform different jump rope tricks such as scissors, side-toe touch, heel-toe, rocker, wounded duck. Refer to the AHA Jump Rope Skills for explanation and more skills. (For the Gym—go to Jump Rope Skills on [heart.org/educator](http://heart.org/educator) for ideas)

9 **Football Balance:** Balance as long as possible in the following positions: Heisman Trophy position (stand on right leg slightly bent, raise left knee up parallel to ground, pretend you have a football tucked under your right shoulder, left arm extended to the side), punt position on one leg (stand on one leg with the other leg straight in front about to kick a ball), catch ball on sideline (lean forward and to the side on one foot and pretend to reach for the ball), quarterback pose (balancing on back foot and arm back ready to throw), back pedal freeze (lean forward on one leg and lift other foot behind body).

10 **Touchdown Dance:** Get in groups of 3 or 4 and create and perform a touchdown dance.

11 **Teacher’s Favorite Game Score:** Teacher takes the final score from their favorite NFL team from any recent game (Games scores can be found on [nfl.com/scores](http://nfl.com/scores)). Students do alternating opposite elbow to knee touches the number of times that equals the final score multiplied by 5.

12 **Class-Pass Challenge:** Begin the challenge with all students standing by their desk. Teacher starts by throwing a paper “sock ball” to a student; that student tosses the ball to another who is standing. After passing the ball, student sits down. This is repeated until all students are seated. The last student standing throws the ball back to the teacher. Repeat the activity. Challenges: Time how quickly the class can do it one time or count how many times the whole class sits down in three minutes. To make a sock ball, roll up a pair of clean socks or use a bean bag or hacky sack.
IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITY BREAKS (continued)

13 **Coach’s Playbook:** Prepare slips of paper with a different “play” (physical activity) listed on each. Designated students pull out a “play” and lead the class in the movement. Example of activities: jumping jacks, march in place, toe touches.

14 **Switch it Up:** Students push chairs away from their desks and sit down. The teacher starts the wave going clockwise around the classroom. Anyone can reverse the direction by standing up and clapping twice.

15 **Coin Toss:** Teacher or designated student flips a coin. If the coin lands on Heads, do 5 squats; if the coin lands on Tails, do 5 elbows to knees (march in place and alternate—lift right knee and touch with left elbow, lift left knee and touch with right elbow). Vary the activities for Heads and Tails such as toe taps (pick an imaginary spot on the floor about 1.5 feet in front of you, quickly alternate tapping your left and right toes on to that spot), lunges, and quick steps (run in place as fast as possible).

16 **Handoff:** Have students get in groups of 5 or 6. Each group stands in a straight line. The first person starts with a tennis ball. On “go” the group sees how quickly they can pass the ball down the line like a quarterback handing off to a running back. Repeat. You can also use a sock ball, paper wad ball, or bean bag with this activity.

17 **Catch an MVP:** Students are in pairs; one is the journalist and one is the MVP. The MVP is too busy to sit down for an interview, so the journalist must walk quickly to catch the MVP. The pair continues walking while the pretend interview is conducted. After 2 minutes, switch roles.

18 **NFL Team Challenge:** Divide class into 4 groups; offense, defense, coaches, cheerleaders. Offensive team will march forward around the room, defensive team will side shuffle, coaches will pace back and forth, and cheerleaders will jump up and down in place. Continue for 1 minute and then switch roles. Repeat until all students have completed all four activities.

19 **Lineman Drill:** Students choose a partner. Partners stand face to face and place hands at chest level. Partners touch one another’s hands (palms against each other) and push (not pull) against each other, trying to make partner take a step off balance. Note, partners can only make contact with one another’s hands. Next, try having students repeat the activity but with their feet apart, feet together and standing on one foot.

20 **Game Time:** Have students move in place as if they are leaving the locker room to enter the stadium. Jump and touch the good luck sign; run through the tunnel and take the field (triumphal entrance); stretch as if you are doing the pre-game warm-up; kick off; pass the ball; signal the touchdown; end zone dance; kick extra point; post-game celebration after a win.

21 **Athlete Archetype Challenge:** Demonstrate how a Competitor, Fitnessizer, Socializer, or Chillaxer would jog or walk in place. After one minute, students demonstrate another Archetype. Repeat until they have demonstrated all 4 types. You can learn about the 4 athlete archetypes on page 4 of the Game Planner.
**Higher/Lower:** One student comes to the front of the room. The teacher writes a 3 digit number on the board behind the student so he/she can’t see it. The student calls out a number while marching in place. The remainder of the class marches in place until the number is called out. If the number is too low, the class jumps up and down (guess higher). If the number is too high, the class squats (guess lower). When the correct number is identified, select a different student to come to the front and repeat.

**Mirror Drill:** Partners face one another. Hold palms up in front of chest, facing partner. The leader will move one hand at a time and the follower will mirror the movement. Switch every minute.

**Trivia Contest:** Students are in teams of 3 or 4. Pose different questions that are content based. When a team thinks they have the correct answer, the designated student from the team walks up to the front of the classroom and writes the team’s answer on the board. The first team to have the right answer does 5 jumping jacks; the other teams do 15 jumping jacks.

**Super Bowl Rock, Paper, Scissors Challenge:** Students are in pairs. Partners compete in one round of traditional Rock, Paper, Scissors (see In-School Break #2). Repeat round if there is a tie. The winner from each pair moves on and finds another winning student to play. The non-winner joins the team of the person who beat them and cheers for them in their next competition. Each round, the winner advances and the non-winners continue to follow the winner and cheer for their team. The game continues until there are only two winners left. Announce that this is the Super Bowl and that this final round determines the Super Bowl Champion.

**Military Style:** Get the kids in a single file line (have one or two lines). The person at the back of the line sprints to the front of the line. When the last person in line sees the previous person take their spot at the front, they take off to the front of the line. Keep moving for 3-5 minutes.

**Grapevine:** Have students do the grapevine movement (alternate crossing left foot over right, then right over left moving in a sideways motion) around the room.

**Around the Clock:** Have every student do 30 jumping jacks at the beginning of class. After 20 minutes into the class, do anther 30 jumping jacks. After 40 minutes, do another 30 and when the bell rings, finish one last set of 30 and hustle to the next class.

**Paper Wad Toss and Catch Challenge:** How many times can you toss and catch a paper wad ball with a partner without dropping the ball? Challenge students with some of the following suggestions: overhand/underhand toss; toss with the non-dominant hand; toss into the recycling bin. (Tip: Keep a supply of paper wad balls in a recycling container or bag or you can use another small-sized ball instead.)

**Walk and Talk:** Break students into groups of 2 or 3, and assign topics related to a current lesson plan that students need to discuss while taking a 5 minute walk. They should report their discussion back to the class.