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. **Back to Back:** Students form pairs and sit down back to back, link arms at the elbows, and bend knees with feet flat on the floor. On command, instruct each pair to stand up without using their hands. Success depends on pushing against one another at the same time. Time the class to see how long it takes to have all pairs standing. Variation: have pairs compete to see which team can stand straight up and sit down again the most times in 15 seconds.

2. **Team Chant:** Form groups of four and provide short action words or vocabulary words. The group works together to create a short cheer with movements with words such as: run, jump, kick, catch. A class competition can be held.

3. **Huddle Knot:** Form two to three groups of five or more students in each group. Each group will form a circle, shoulder-to-shoulder. Each student places a hand in the middle of the circle and grasps another student’s hand. Then ask students to put their other hand in the middle and grasp a different person’s hand. Students cannot hold a person’s hand that is standing on either side of them. Explain to students that they need to untangle themselves, without letting go of hands.

4. **Under the Goalpost:** Form groups of five. Two students hold a yard stick while remaining students move under the yardstick. Hold the stick at head, shoulder, hip and knee levels. Switch out holders each time the level changes. Variation: use a jump rope instead of the stick and also have the holders rotate under while continuing to hold the rope.
NFL Coast to Coast Workout: Associate a movement with each NFL city. Call out the city name and perform the activity. For example, Baltimore-bend; Seattle-shake; Indianapolis-hop; Kansas City-balance; Tampa Bay-walk; San Diego-strut; Pittsburgh-sway; Denver-jump.

Tally Score: Students are in pairs. Both partners put their hands in a fist and face each other. Pump fists together in a “one, two, three” motion. On “three”, both reveal a number 1-5 on one fist. The first person who adds it up correctly and verbalizes it, quickly chooses a physical activity (such as lunges, hops, elbows to knees) and leads his/her partner in 10 repetitions. Variations: use two hands, subtraction or multiplication.

Impulse: Form two teams. Have teams stand and face each other. Place a ball or a soft object, spaced evenly between the players, at one end. Instruct teams to hold hands and explain that the object of the game is to pass a pulse down the line. Practice this one time by having the players closest to the teacher lightly squeeze the hand of the person next to them until the “pulse” reaches the end of the line; make sure that players do not squeeze hands until they have received the pulse. When the person at the end of the line receives a pulse, they must reach out and grab the object. The “winning” team then rotates players, so that the person at the end (closest to the object) moves to the beginning and everyone shifts down one space.

Desk Relay: Have students sit in rows of desks or chairs with the first person in each row holding an object such as a bean bag, yarn ball or tennis ball. On the signal to begin, the object is passed over his/her head to the next person until object reaches the end of the row. The last student runs to the front of the room, touches the wall and sits in the first desk while everyone else moves down one desk to sit in the desk behind them. Continue for two minutes. Have each group count how many times they were able to pass the object down the row – then challenge each group to beat their score by two!

True/False: Prepare a list of true/false questions based on class content. Arrange chairs in a circle. Have students walk around the chairs and listen to the question and determine if the answer is ‘True’ or ‘False’. If the answer is True, find a chair and sit down. If the answer is False, do knee to elbow touches.

Hog Call: Create index cards with one-half of a compound word. Examples: jumping/ jack, jump /rope, foot/ ball, back/ hand. Students read the word on their card and then walk around the classroom to find his/her compound word partner. After the partners locate each other, they should march in place together until everyone has found his/her partner. Then, each pair should act out the compound word. For example—if the word is jumping jack, students should do 10 jumping jacks before sitting down.

Sports Festival: Instruct students to mimic various sports movements for 15 seconds. Examples: serve a tennis ball, bump a volleyball, shoot a lay-up, block a jump shot, cross-country ski, catch a football, shoot an arrow.
Cool-down Activities:
- Take three deep breaths while raising arms over head.
- Do some light stretching for a minute (side bends, bend down and touch your toes, arms circles, head rolls, etc.).
- Have students lay their head on their desk while the teacher counts for 20 seconds.

It All Adds Up: Choose one student to lead a movement or exercise (students can choose what movement they want). All students follow the movement. After 30 seconds, choose a different student to lead who starts with the first movement and then adds his/her own movement. Rotate leaders several times adding onto the series of movements.

Night at the Museum: One student is the night watchman and everyone else is a statue in a museum. The night watchman closes their eyes for 15 seconds. Before he opens his eyes everyone should freeze like a statue—be creative. The goal is for “frozen” students to actually make slight movements without letting the night watchman catch the movements. Whoever is caught moving first becomes the new watchman.

Fitness Dice: Use two dice. Assign each number of the dice a physical activity. Roll one dice to determine the number of times the activity will be done. Roll the other dice to determine the activity. Examples of physical activities include: march in place, elbows to knees, reverse lunges, heel walks.

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.

Rock, Paper, Scissors with Legs: Students play a traditional game of Rock, Paper, Scissors with their feet. Jump three 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.

No Stress Test: Make it a classroom tradition to have a five minute walking break before a test to help everyone unwind and relax.

Yoga Positions: Have students stand.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
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 five 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).

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 four types. You can learn about the four athlete archetypes on page 4 of the Game Planner.

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.

Around the Clock: Have every student do 30 jumping jacks at the beginning of class. After 20 minutes into the class, do another 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.

Active Literature: Read or have students read excerpts from literature or news articles aloud to the entire classroom and every time the words a, an, the, by and there are heard, the classroom must stand up, jump and then sit down quickly.

Fighting Fatigue: Have each student bounce around in place like a boxer for one minute. For the next minute, have them punch straight up in the air, first right then left arm. Take a 10 second break and finish with punching out straight in front at a steady pace, alternating left and right arms. Make sure students are spaced at least an arms-length apart.

Take a Seat: Have students find a place on the wall and slide down into a position as if they are sitting in a 90-degree angle against the wall. Back should be flat against the wall, knees directly above ankles. Knees should NOT extend beyond toes. Hold for as long as possible and repeat 3 times.

Stomping Out the Myths: During a class lesson where students are asked to determine if the answer is true or false, have the kids use movement to give their answers. Read a question. If they believe the statement is true, have the students stay seated and punch their arms toward the ceiling. If they believe the answer is false, they get up and march in place.

Acting Out: Read a paragraph or page of a book and every time an action verb comes up, the students have to act it out.

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.

Look Ma, No Hands!: Have students put an object on the floor (pen, notebook, ID card) and call out different body part they have to try to pick it up with (for example: elbows, feet, knees, forearm, neck, etc).