



## Classroom Energizers at School

Classroom energizers activate the brain, improve on-task behavior and leave students more focused and ready to learn. There are many fun and creative ways to include fitness breaks in the daily schedule, and many resources available to help schools get started.

# ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

## TIP SHEET

### Classroom Activity Breaks

- 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, Energizing Brain Breaks and the Just-a-Minute (JAM) school program are all 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.<sup>2</sup>
- Physical activity can also be linked to specific academic content learning.<sup>5</sup> 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, Take 10 and the Healthy Kids Club are good resources.

### GoNoodle

GoNoodle gets kids moving to be their smartest, strongest, sillies, 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.<sup>4</sup>



Every kid healthy, active and ready to learn

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## 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 to 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.

Parent advocate Sharon 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.

## Additional Resources

Instant Recess: [toniyancey.com/IR\\_Products.html](http://toniyancey.com/IR_Products.html)

Just-a-Minute (JAM) Program: [healthetips.com/jam-program](http://healthetips.com/jam-program)

Energizing Brain Breaks: [energizingbrainbreaks.com](http://energizingbrainbreaks.com)

Brain Gym: [braingym.org](http://braingym.org)

Healthy Kids Club: [pyhs.org/body.cfm?id=1545](http://pyhs.org/body.cfm?id=1545)

Yoga Health Foundation: [yogahealthfoundation.org](http://yogahealthfoundation.org)

Yoga 4 Classrooms: [yoga4classrooms.com](http://yoga4classrooms.com)

Mindful Life: [mindfullifeyoga.com](http://mindfullifeyoga.com)

Yoga Kids: [yogakids.com](http://yogakids.com)

### Content Learning with Movement

Active Academics: [activeacademics.org](http://activeacademics.org)

Take 10!: [take10.net](http://take10.net)

Math and Literacy Activity Cards: [pysh.org/body.cfm?id=1545](http://pysh.org/body.cfm?id=1545)

### For Secondary Students

Colorado Legacy Foundation, "Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox - Physical Activity Breaks in the Secondary Classroom.": [collegacy.org/resource/movemore](http://collegacy.org/resource/movemore)

**Action for Healthy Kids®** is a nationwide grassroots network mobilizing school professionals, families and communities to take actions that improve school foods, nutrition education, physical activity and physical education for all students. Through funding opportunities, expert technical assistance, and our flagship program, Game On, Action for Healthy Kids supports schools in becoming healthier places where children thrive.



1, 2, 3, 4, 5: See [ActionforHealthyKids.org/References](http://ActionforHealthyKids.org/References)