Brain Breaks Make a Real Difference

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The importance of Brain Breaks

What the research and neuroscience tell us

Research-Tested Benefits of Breaks
www.edutopia.org/article/research-tested-benefits-breaks

BRAIN BREAKS – ACTIVE AND QUIET

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE BREAKS

As movement is incorporated into the daily classroom routine
- the brain is able to function at higher levels,
- Stress and anxiety are reduced

Improves STAYING ON TASK

Increases ATTENTIVENESS

Restores ENERGY AND MOTIVATION

Corps actif, cerveau performant: Outaouais 2010-2019
25 schools now participating to enhance academic performance.

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE BREAKS

The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
July 2010

- classroom-based physical activities may have favorable associations with indicators of
  - cognitive functioning,
  - academic behaviors, and/or
  - academic achievement.

There was **no evidence that allotting classroom time for these activities was negatively associated with academic achievement.**

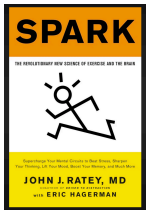
PHYSICALLY ACTIVE BREAKS

IMPROVE THE BRAIN

Preadolescent children who are more fit and more active show:
- greater volume in the hippocampus (memory)
- greater white matter integrity (connectivity)
- elevated and more efficient patterns of brain activity, and
- superior cognitive performance and scholastic achievement.

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE BREAKS

IMPROVE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

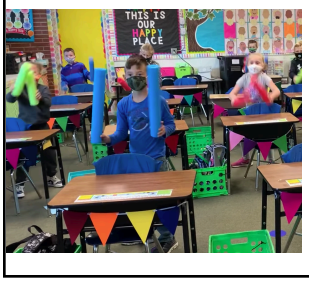


J. J. Ratey (2008), Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain

Exercise is as effective as certain medications for treating anxiety and depression.

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE BREAKS

IMPROVE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING



When emotions run high, we need to provide time for emotional release.

Physical activity provides a natural release for

- **adrenaline**
- **cortisol**

Helps express the EMOTION of

FRUSTRATION

QUIET BREAKS

IMPROVE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

When the world is ALARMING and FRUSTRATING

QUIET ACTIVITIES

Help to calm the nervous system.

Help children *to make something work* in a world that is not always working.

QUIET BREAKS

IMPROVE COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

"I think people are scared to take breaks because they think learning stops. But learning doesn't stop during a break. The brain is still doing things with that information you took in."

"Rest is indeed not idleness."

QUIET BREAKS

IMPROVE COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

LEFT HEMISPHERE

- **detail-oriented**
- **decontextualizes**
- **finds facts**
- **wants THE RULE**
- **looks for THE ANSWER**

RIGHT HEMISPHERE

- **whole-oriented**
- **contextualizes**
- **makes vivid and concrete,**
- **takes in the whole picture**

To move information from the Left Hemisphere to the Right Hemisphere, the brain requires **REST**.

The research has spoken.

Brain Breaks

whether they are ***active or more restful***

are not just a bridging activity

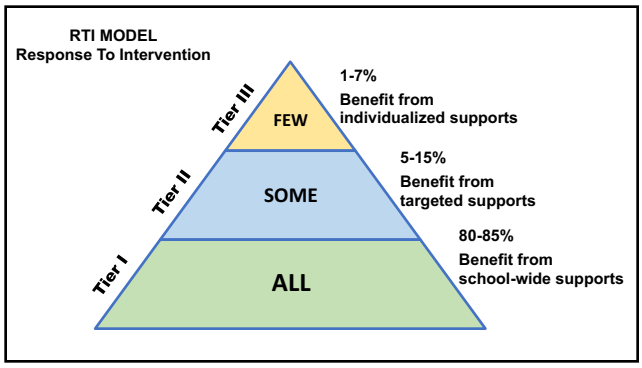
but they ***actively contribute*** to the

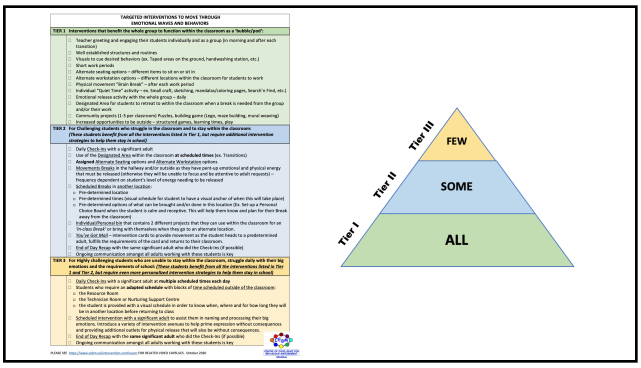
intellectual development,

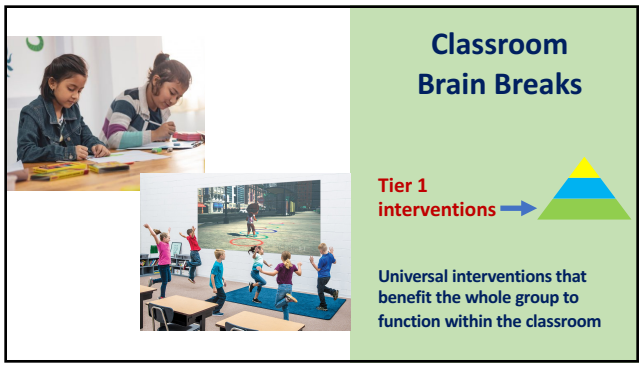
academic progress and

emotional health

of the students in our classrooms


RTI MODEL
Response To Intervention
Tier III
FEW
1-7%
Benefit from individualized supports
Tier II
SOME
5-15%
Benefit from targeted supports
Tier I
ALL
80-85%
Benefit from school-wide supports


TARGETED INTERVENTIONS TO MOVE THROUGH EMOTIONAL WAVES AND BEHAVIORS
Tier III
FEW
Tier II
SOME
Tier I
ALL


Classroom Brain Breaks
Tier 1 interventions
Universal interventions that benefit the whole group to function within the classroom

Classroom Brain Breaks - Best Practices
• Allow for some silliness, this often masks vulnerability and being physically awkward with some exercises

Be creative, use different mediums
Spring Movement Game
With 36 Mini Action Cards!
Fly like a bird
Fitness BINGO
FREE

Make it fun and engaging!

Sparking interest and maintaining engagement

Having fun ways of selecting the activities

Changing things up regularly helps to build engagement and maintain motivation

Digital HOW TO USE MOVE It MOVE It CARDS

Move It Move It Cards are a great way to get the wiggles out and build strength and balance skills at the same time.

When you can sense your students need a quick break, simply share your screen in your conferencing platform.

Some resources offer a digital platform that can be used on a Smartboard

It is also possible to set-up a Movement Area within the classroom with selected exercise posters

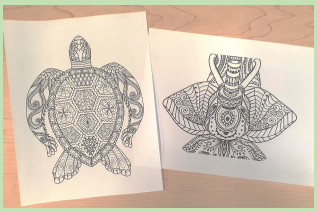
"Quiet" Brain Break Options

Quiet Brain Break Options

Mazes – laminated pages makes them re-usable with dry-erase markers

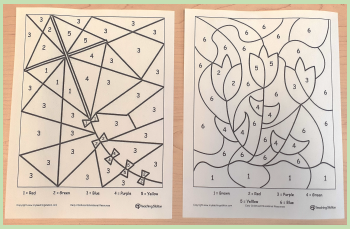
Quiet Brain Break Options

Mandala images and Mosaic Sticker Pad activities



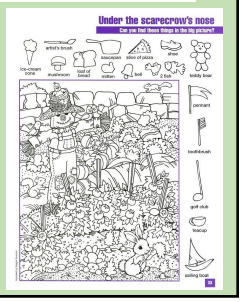
Quiet Brain Break Options

Dot-to-dot and Color-by-number activities



Quiet Brain Break Options

Search'n Find activities



Community Projects

Puzzling Area

"Movable" Puzzle Area

Community Projects

Circle weaving and loom weaving

Community Projects

Rug hooking and Knot-a-Quilt

Active Recess Options for the Whole Group

Obstacle courses

Hula-hoops

Tag games

Outdoor target throwing and kicking

Brain Break ideas - Kindergarten

Quiet Time Activities	Physical Activities	Group Activities
IN CLASS: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Lacing pages ✓ Collage making ✓ Search'N Find placements (laminated, used with dry-erase markers) ✓ Play Doh ✓ Pattern making with beads ✓ Letter games ✓ Magnets – shapes, letters, numbers ✓ Draw on the Teacher's	IN CLASS: ✓ Go Noodle ✓ Just Dance ✓ Fitness Bingo ✓ 10 sided exercise dice ✓ Simon Says Game ✓ Desk Drumming ✓ Pool Noodle workout ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Yoga exercises	IN CLASS: ✓ Mural drawing on banner paper ✓ Puzzle (larger group puzzle) ✓ Building game ✓ THEME craft table ✓ LEGO wall
ONLINE: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Play Doh ✓ Making a craft	ONLINE: ✓ Go Noodle/ Just Dance ✓ Dance party / Freeze dance ✓ Playing air guitar on a song ✓ Fitness Bingo ✓ Yoga / Stretching / Animal actions ✓ Pool Noodle workout ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Simon Says Game ✓ Drumming	ONLINE: ✓ Talent show ✓ Show and tell ✓ Reading a story (or an article of interest) ✓ Virtual Scavenger Hunt

Brain Break ideas – Cycle 1

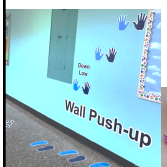
Quiet Time Activities	Physical Activities	Group Activities
IN CLASS: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Lacing pages ✓ Collage making ✓ Search'N Find placements ✓ Laminated mazes with dry-erase markers ✓ Play Doh ✓ Pattern making with beads ✓ Sorting games ✓ "Craft Station" ✓ Yarn creation -corking, straw weaving, finger knitting ✓ Fidget making ✓ Sketching (personal book)	IN CLASS: ✓ Go Noodle ✓ Just Dance ✓ Fitness Bingo ✓ 10 sided exercise dice ✓ Hula hoops (a station in the room) ✓ Simon Says Game ✓ Desk Drumming ✓ Pool Noodle workout ✓ Alphabet Fitness ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Yoga exercises	IN CLASS: ✓ Mural drawing on banner paper ✓ Puzzle ✓ Building game ✓ THEME craft table ✓ Weaving project ✓ LEGO wall
ONLINE: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Play Doh ✓ Making a craft ✓ Yarn creation -corking, straw weaving, finger knitting ✓ Fidget making ✓ Sketching (personal book)	ONLINE: ✓ Go Noodle ✓ Just Dance ✓ Dance party / Freeze dance ✓ Playing air guitar on a song ✓ Fitness Bingo ✓ Yoga / Stretching / Animal actions ✓ Alphabet Fitness ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Simon Says Game ✓ Drumming ✓ Pool Noodle workout	ONLINE: ✓ Math Challenge games ✓ Riddles: Guess what I am? ✓ Charades ✓ Pictionary ✓ Alphabet object memory game (theme: animals, food, etc.) ✓ Talent show ✓ Show and tell

Brain Break ideas – Cycle 2

Quiet Time Activities	Physical Activities	Group Activities
IN CLASS: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Lacing pages ✓ Collage making ✓ Search'N Find placements ✓ Play Doh ✓ Pattern making with beads ✓ "Craft Station" ✓ Yarn creation -corking, straw weaving, finger knitting ✓ Fidget making ✓ Scrapbooking ✓ Sketching (personal book)	IN CLASS: ✓ Go Noodle/ Just Dance ✓ Fitness Bingo ✓ Minute to Win It Challenges ✓ 10 sided exercise dice ✓ Desk Drumming ✓ Pool Noodle workout ✓ Alphabet Fitness ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Yoga exercises ✓ "Create your own dance routine"	IN CLASS: ✓ Mural drawing on banner paper ✓ Puzzle ✓ Maze construction/simple wood projects ✓ THEME craft table
ONLINE: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Making a craft ✓ Origami ✓ Yarn creation -corking, straw weaving, finger knitting ✓ Fidget making ✓ Scrapbooking ✓ Sketching (personal book)	ONLINE: ✓ Go Noodle/ Just Dance ✓ Dance party / Freeze dance ✓ Playing air guitar on a song ✓ Fitness Bingo ✓ Yoga / Stretching ✓ Alphabet Fitness ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Minute to Win It Challenges ✓ Desk Drumming ✓ Pool Noodle workout ✓ Create your own dance routine	ONLINE: ✓ Math Challenge games ✓ Riddles: Guess what I am? ✓ Name that tune game ✓ 20 questions game ✓ Word association game ✓ Storyteller game ✓ Charades ✓ Hangman/Melting Snowman ✓ Pictionary ✓ Talent show ✓ Reading a story (or an article of interest) ✓ Virtual Scavenger Hunt

Brain Break ideas – Cycle 3

Quiet Time Activities	Physical Activities	Group Activities
IN CLASS: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Origami (have patterns, paper and samples already made) ✓ Reading ✓ Listening to music ✓ "Craft Station" ✓ Knitting, weaving, craft creation ✓ Fidget making ✓ Scrapbooking ✓ Sketching (personal book)	IN CLASS: ✓ Go Noodle ✓ Just Dance ✓ Minute to Win It Challenges ✓ Desk Drumming – create their own routines ✓ Pool Noodle workout ✓ Alphabet Fitness ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Yoga exercises ✓ "Create your own dance routine"	IN CLASS: ✓ Mural drawing on banner paper ✓ Puzzle ✓ THEME craft table ✓ Maze construction/simple wood projects
ONLINE: ✓ Mandalas/coloring pages ✓ Making a craft ✓ Origami ✓ Yarn creation -corking, straw weaving, finger knitting ✓ Fidget making ✓ Scrapbooking ✓ Sketching (personal book) ✓ Reading ✓ Creating own story book ✓ Listening to music	ONLINE: ✓ Go Noodle ✓ Just Dance ✓ Minute to Win It Challenges ✓ Drumming ✓ Pool Noodle workout ✓ Alphabet Fitness ✓ Boks Fitness program ✓ Yoga exercises ✓ Create your own dance routine ✓ Stepping	ONLINE: ✓ Math Challenge games ✓ Riddles: Guess what I am? ✓ Name that tune game ✓ Storyteller game ✓ Word association game ✓ Charades ✓ Pictionary ✓ Hangman/Melting Snowman ✓ Talent show ✓ Sketching (personal book) ✓ Reading a story (or an article of interest) ✓ Virtual Scavenger Hunt



Movement Stations within a School

Tier 2 interventions

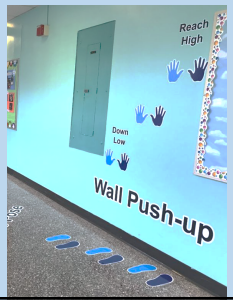
Targeted interventions for challenging students who struggle in class and to stay within the group

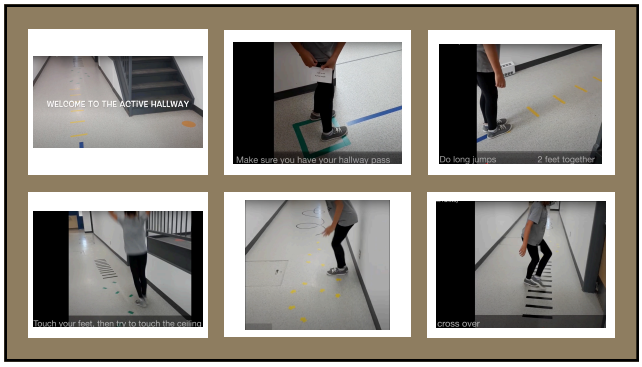
When to use the Movement Area outside the classroom:

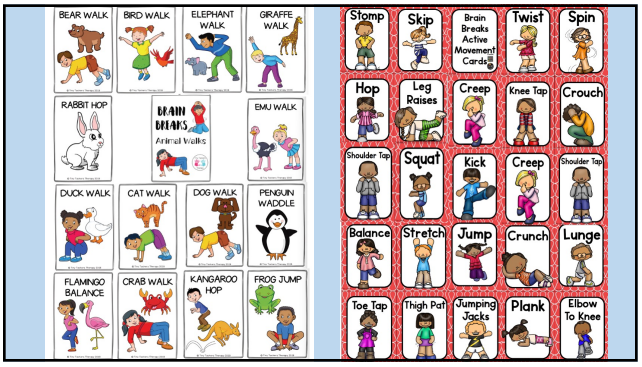
When I notice that a student is:

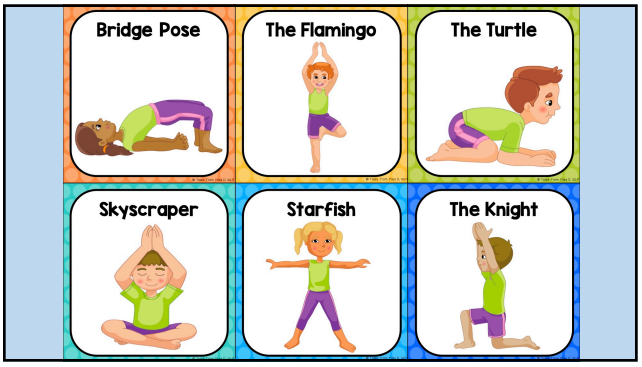
- Showing signs of anxiety/stress
- Tired
- Asking to have a break
- Not available to learn
- Not able to remain in his/her personal space
- Acting up

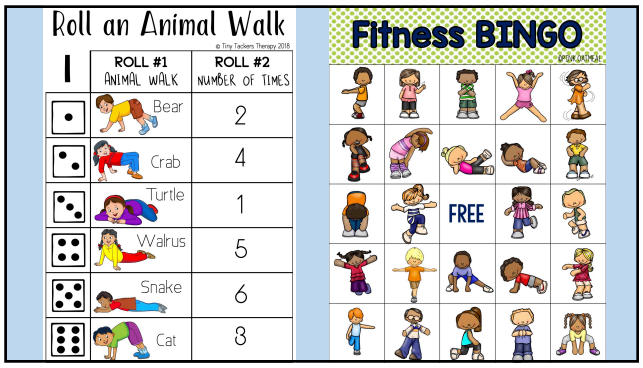
High Energy Activities

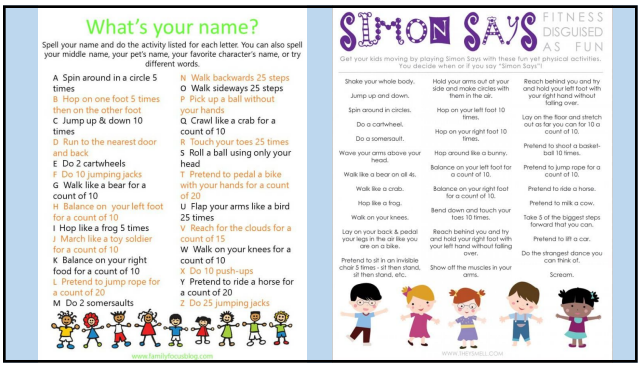


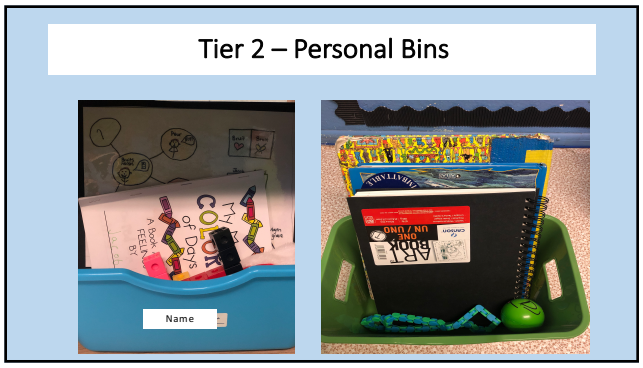







Roll an Animal Walk
© Tiny Tackers Therapy 2018
ROLL #1 ANIMAL WALK
ROLL #2 NUMBER OF TIMES
Bear 2
Crab 4
Turtle 1
Walrus 5
Snake 6
Cat 8
Fitness BINGO
FREE


What's your name?
Spell your name and do the activity listed for each letter. You can also spell your middle name, your pet's name, your favorite character's name, or try different words.
A Spin around in a circle 5 times
B Hop on one foot 5 times then on the other foot
C Jump up & down 10 times
D Run to the nearest door and back
E Do 2 cartwheels
F Do 10 jumping jacks
G Walk like a bear for a count of 10
H Balance on your left foot for a count of 10
I Hop like a frog 5 times
J March like a toy soldier for a count of 10
K Balance on your right food for a count of 10
L Pretend to jump rope for a count of 20
M Do 2 somersaults
N Walk backwards 25 steps
O Walk sideways 25 steps
P Pick up a ball without your hands
Q Crawl like a crab for a count of 10
R Touch your toes 25 times
S Roll a ball using only your head
T Pretend to pedal a bike with your hands for a count of 20
U Flap your arms like a bird 25 times
V Reach for the clouds for a count of 15
W Walk on your knees for a count of 10
X Do 10 push-ups
Y Pretend to ride a horse for a count of 20
Z Do 25 jumping jacks
SIMON SAYS
FITNESS DISGUISED AS FUN


Tier 2 – Personal Bins
Name

Tier 2 – Personal Bin - Quiet Activities
A Plump star

Tier 2 – Personal Bin - Quiet Activities
Drawing
Mandalas/Coloring

Tier 2 – Personal Bin - Quiet Activities
Bead pets
Origami
Rainbow Loom bracelets & fidgets
Friendship bracelets

Tier 2 – Personal Bin - 1 person games

Cards

Hoppers

Rush Hour Junior/Rush Hour

Tip Over

Personal Choice Board

- Set-up **with** the student
- **When** they are calm, open and receptive to intervention
- Opportunity to voice interests and have some control over the activities he/she will do during scheduled time out of the classroom
- These items can be placed in the student's Personal Bin, ready to be used when needed

Setting up for successful online sessions

Helpful tips to help your students:

- Choose a location to set-up a "workstation"
- Sufficient space for computer/iPad and work tools
- School work "tool kit" and required books
- Schedule
- Insert Brain Breaks into each online session
- Comfortable seating
- Good lighting
- Space to move during Brain Breaks
- Remove any potential distractions
- Go to the washroom before class starts
- Have your favorite fidget tool to help you manage the time online

Be Creative, Use Different Mediums

Random picker wheel
https://www.flippity.net
https://tools-unite.com/tools/random-picker-wheel

Be Creative, Use Different Mediums

Do you play a musical instrument ?
Show off your talent!

You have a fun, comical side?
Please DO share this with your students!

Maintaining Interest and Engagement can be Challenging when Teaching Online

Set-up challenges to have students be active participants:

- *Intersperse teaching* with interactive games; Miming, 7-up, 20 questions, etc.
- *Set-Up special* ***Theme Days*** – Pyjama, Silly Hats, Pet Day etc.
- ***Show and Tell*** - Share favorite games/toys/projects
- ***Scavenger Hunt*** Incorporates intrigue, play – fulness and movement! Have the students gather different items, such as: a hat, a shoe, a hairbrush, a plastic cup, a stuffed animal, a piece of grass, a rock, a book, a pencil, a fruit, etc. You can name 1 or 2 objects at a time…ready, set, go!

Suggestions for more online Brain Breaks

Just Dance

Boks Fitness Program

Scavenger Hunt

Brain Break resources on Teachers Pay Teachers

Begin an online session with a physical activity

Insert some physical fun and movement, play a game!

Changing things up regularly helps to build engagement and maintain motivation