

Brain & Body Breaks

Taking small breaks throughout the day can help us recharge, refocus, and reduce stress. This activity encourages students to engage in simple movements, mindfulness exercises, and offer accessible ways to refresh the mind and body—helping students return to learning with renewed energy and focus.

How to Use

1

Introduce the concept

by explaining to students that taking short mental and physical breaks can improve focus, reduce stress, and support overall well-being. Emphasize that the breaks are flexible—students can choose what works best for them.

2

Decide how long the break will be

according to what works best for your classroom schedule. Let students know they can participate in one or multiple activities during this time.

3

Provide students with a list of options

either displayed on the board, printed, or verbally shared.

4

Guide the activity

by walking students through a group exercise from the “Brain & Body Breaks” options. If students choose their own, ensure they have enough space and quiet time to participate.

5

Incorporate regularly

as part of your classroom routine throughout the school year to help students develop healthy habits for managing stress and staying engaged.

Optional:

After the break, ask students how they feel and if they noticed a difference in their mood or focus.

Brain Break Activities

(Mental Relaxation & Mindfulness)

These activities help refocus our brains, reduce stress, and engage our minds in a calming way.

1

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise:

Identify 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste to bring awareness to the present moment.

2

Silent Journaling:

Jot down any thoughts, feelings, or random ideas to clear your mind.

3

Mindful Breathing Exercises:

Practice deep breathing techniques such as box breathing (inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4) to calm the mind and body.

Visualization Activity: With your eyes closed, imagine a peaceful place or a positive outcome for something currently working toward.

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Body Break Activities

(Physical Movement & Relaxation)

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1

Chair or Standing Stretches:

Engage in simple and safe stretches that can be done from your desk, such as neck rolls, shoulder shrugs, or seated forward bends. Only select exercises that feel comfortable.

2

Heads Down for 5 Minutes:

Put your head down and close your eyes for a few minutes to rest and reset.

3

Step Outside for Fresh Air:

If possible and allowed, step outside briefly to get some air and reset your focus. Pick a tree to sit by or notice three things you've never noticed before.

4

Quick Movement Challenge:

Stand up and do 10 jumping jacks, shake out your arms and legs, or walk in place to re-energize your body.