

Active school

Activity cards combined

Physical Activity Breaks - Activity breaks are brief 10 to 15 minute-activities that aim to energize and refocus students. Activity breaks can take various forms and can be completed in any amount of space. They are great introduction activities for Physical Activity integrated in lessons (see [second card set](#)).

Why?

Most primary school children spend on average 70% of their classroom time sitting. This is a danger for their health. The natural order of the classroom has always been for pupils to sit. Whether this involves, talking, discussing, working in groups, or listening to the teacher, most of the time this is all done from the comfort of a chair.

The 20 cards displayed [here](#) offer the teachers of your school 20 ways to combine physical activities and academic learning. The result will be easy to see: better concentration AND better health in 50 years!



~ when you ~
MOVE MORE,
~ you ~
LEARN MORE!



Set of cards for activities combined with lessons.

Research shows that physical activity has positive academic effects allowing students to be more concentrated, attentive and engaged in learning. Movement is exploratory and can shift a classroom climate from controlled to more open-ended contributing also to students' behavioral and emotional well-being.

Movement during classroom time can feel risky and chaotic. With the proper management, however, movement will not only facilitate learning but stimulates greater creativity, communication and cooperation.

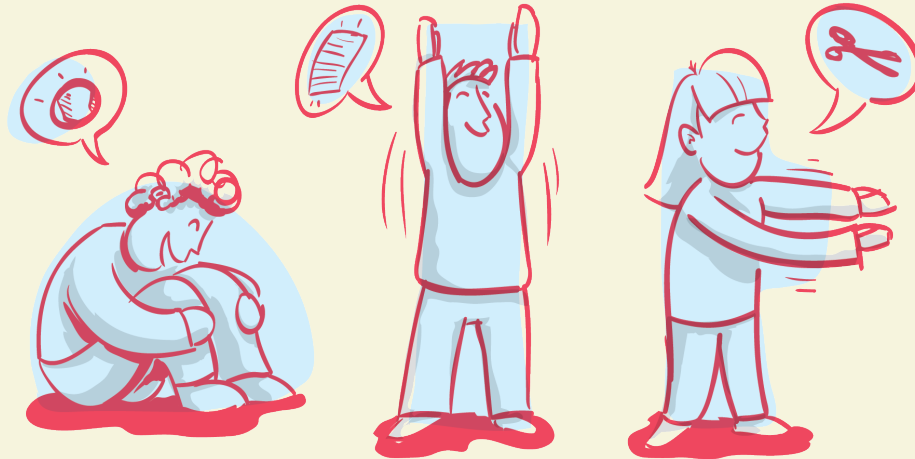
Physical activity breaks, also known as active breaks, are brief, 5 to 15-minute activities that aim to energize students. They can take various forms and can be implemented in any amount of space. You can use **activities combined with lessons** in your classroom for:

- Movement for Movement's Sake – for communication, cooperation or recreation
- Relaxation, recuperation, or 're-focus'
- Transitions between classroom activities, school subjects or exams.

These cards are part of a rich democracy-learning website for students, teachers, principals and parents. The approach chosen there makes clear, that school is a micro society that needs to give possibilities not only to learn, but also to live democratically". See: www.living-democracy.com

1. Rock, Paper, Scissors Challenge

Students are in pairs. Partners compete in one round of traditional Rock, Paper, and Scissors.



Variation: Rock, Paper, Scissors Challenge with Legs: Students play a traditional game of Rock, Paper, and Scissors with their feet. Instead of just counting to 3, students jump 3 times with feet together and then choose position: Rock = feet together; Paper = feet apart; Scissors = one foot forward and one foot back (crisscrossed position). To start, jump and count: 1-2-3 go. Students play best out of three with a classmate and then find a new partner to challenge.

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2. Clock It

Students stand up and use their right arm to indicate the minute hand of a clock and the left arm to indicate the hour. Call out different times and the students move arms into the correct clock position.



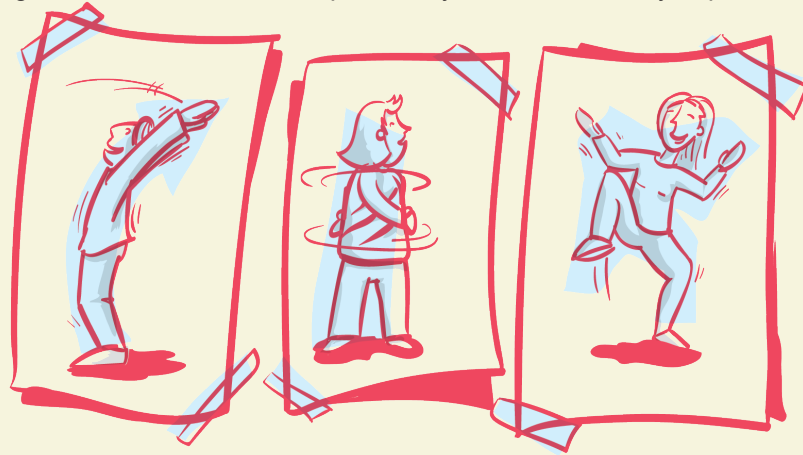
Challenge: gradually increase the speed in which times are called out.

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3. Minute Masters

1. Display a list of different exercises for all to see on the wall or board.
2. Set a minute timer for the designated time and at each minute the students perform an exercise of choice.
3. Each student may choose different exercises or stay on the same one each minute. The choice should be the student's. This will help give the students ownership and they will be more likely to perform the activity.



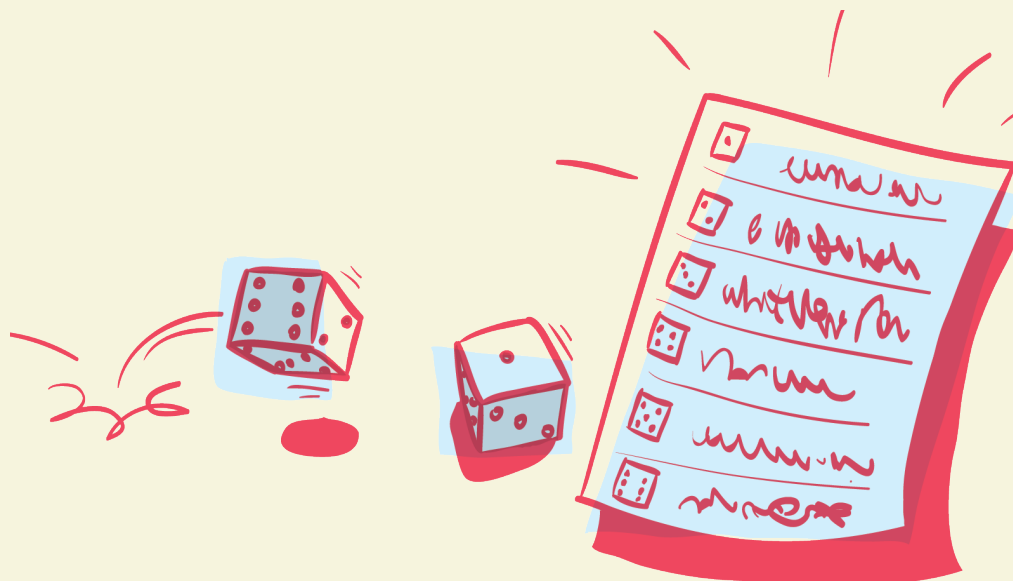
Some suggested exercises: Jumping Jacks, Marching, Knee Lifts, Jogging in Place, Alternating Lunges, Twisting, and Stationary Jumping. This is an activity that can be used periodically throughout the year. Playing music during this time may be nice.

Variations: See how many repetitions students can do with the above exercises. Record their scores individually or as a class at each 1-minute interval. Challenge the students to improve their repetitions the next time.

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4. 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.



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5. What's My Job?

1. Students are in pairs at their desks with pencil and paper.
2. Partners face each other (one facing the board and the other facing the back of the room)
3. You write a series of professions on the board which could include: Teacher, Doctor, Basketball Player, Hockey Player, Truck Driver, Fireman, Chef.
4. The student facing the board must act out the entire list in 2 minutes while the student facing the back of the class room attempts to write down which profession his/her partner is acting out.
5. After the 2 minutes have ended, the students facing the back of the classroom turn around and see if their lists match that on the chalkboard.
6. Students in each pair switch places (the writer becomes the Actor and visa versa).



Variation: Note: Entire game could be played silently. Create a different list of professions for each group.

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6. The Wave

Have students form a circle. Have a student start the traditional wave motion (raise arms as second student immediately follows, like you see at a sports event). Have the same student now do a different action to start the wave, like getting in a squat position. Have the same lead student lean left and everyone follows, then lean right. To add more action/ activity, begin a second or third simultaneous wave each time.

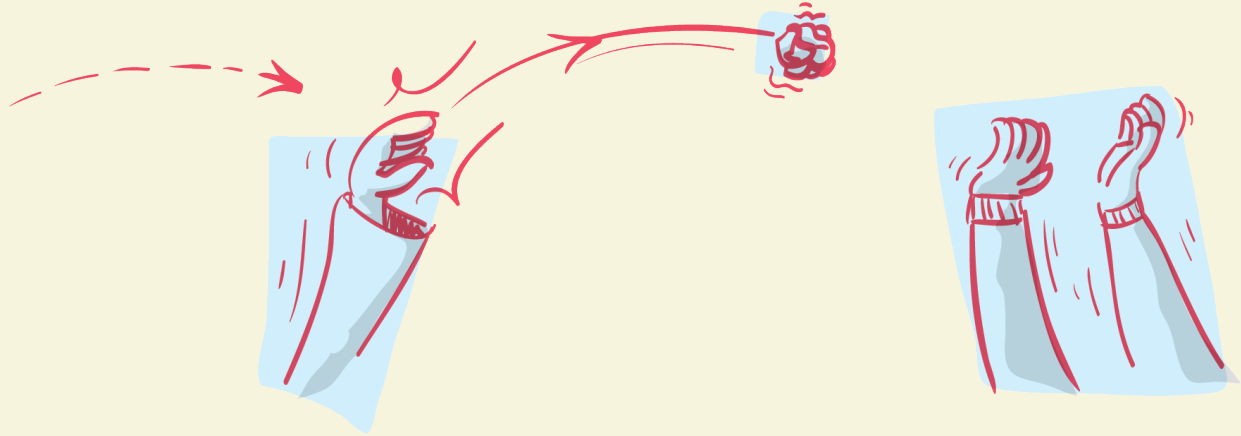


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7. Class-Pass Challenge

Begin the challenge with all students standing by their desk. You start 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 you.



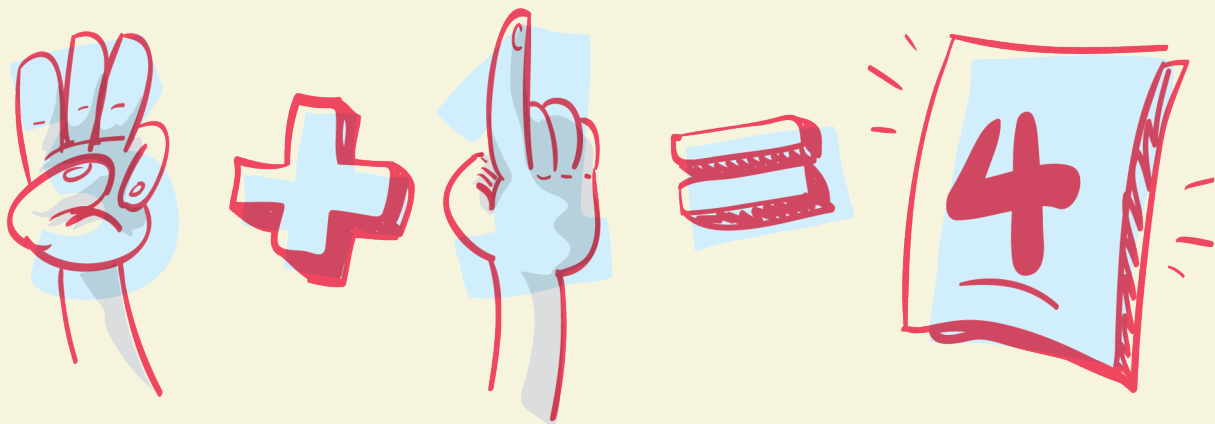
Challenges: Time how quickly the class can do it one time or count how many times the whole class sits down in three minutes. To make a sock ball, roll up a pair of clean socks or use a bean bag or hacky sack.

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8. Add it Up

List 10 exercises on the board (such as march in place, elbows to knees, reverse lunges, heel walks etc). Partners face one another and pump fist in unison while counting, ‘one, two, three.’ On ‘three’ both partners reveal a number 1 -5 with fingers/thumb. Partners quickly add up the numbers and refer to the list to see the exercise to perform for 30 seconds. Change partners and repeat activity.



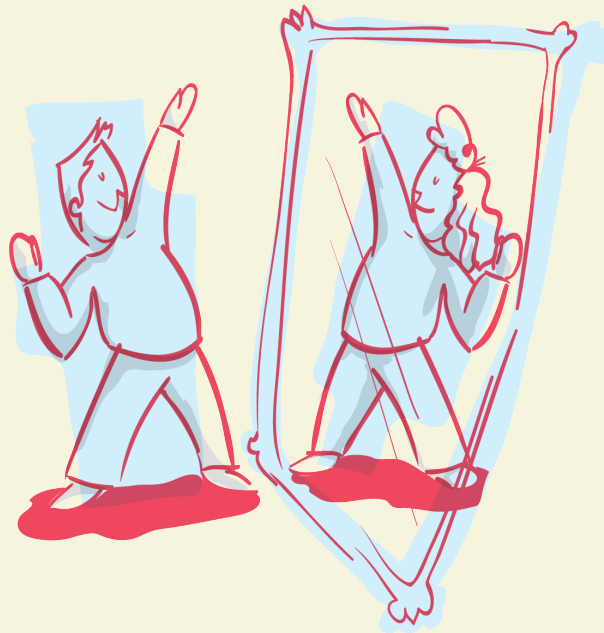
Variation: Tally Score: Students are in pairs. Both partners put their hands in a fist and face each other. Pump fists together in a “one, two, three” motion. On “three”, both reveal a number 1-5 on one fist. The first person who adds it up correctly and verbalizes it, quickly chooses a physical activity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

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9. Mirror Drill

Students in pairs facing 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.



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10. 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!

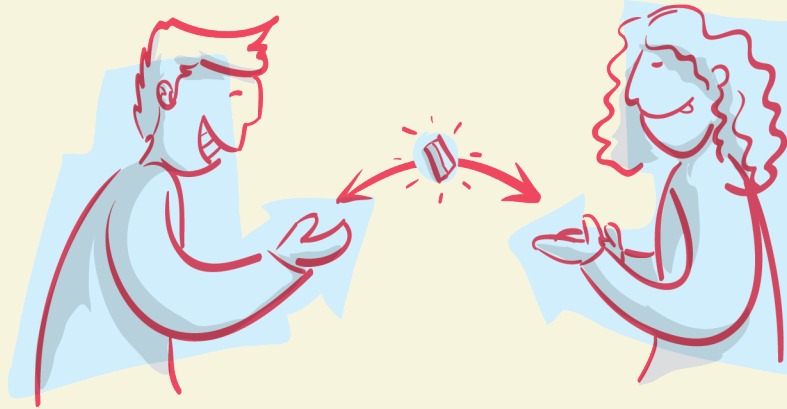


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11. Quick Hands

Have the students form pairs and stand across from each other. Give each pair a soft object such as an eraser, ball or beanbag. Explain to the students that when you say “go,” the pairs will try to throw the object back and forth as many times as possible until you say stop. Rotate partners.



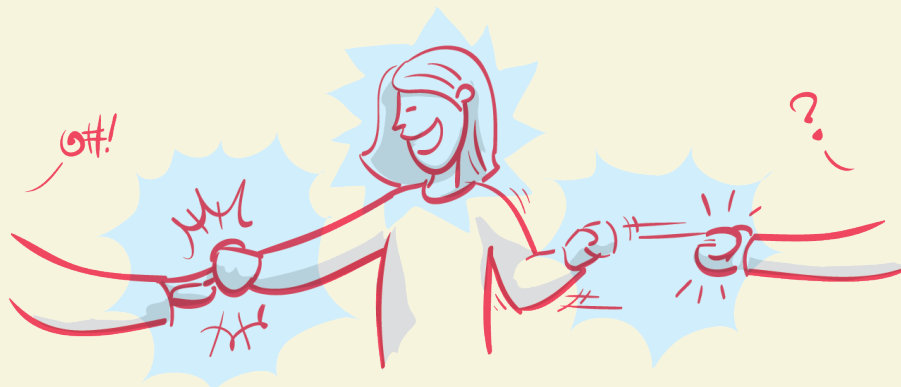
Line Change: Form groups of 3 and stand in a line facing forward. When you call out a command (down, set or hike), have the students change positions: Down = first and last person change positions; Set = first person goes to the end of the line; Hike = all three students turn and face the other direction. **Challenge** the students by calling out commands quickly.

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12. Gotcha!

Students form a circle either standing or sitting if differently abled. Each person places the palm of their right hand flat and facing upwards. Each person places their left index finger into the palm of the person to their left. When the teacher says ‘Gotcha’ students try to grab the person’s finger with their right hand and at the same time avoid having their left index finger grabbed by the person to their left. Switch hand positions and repeat.

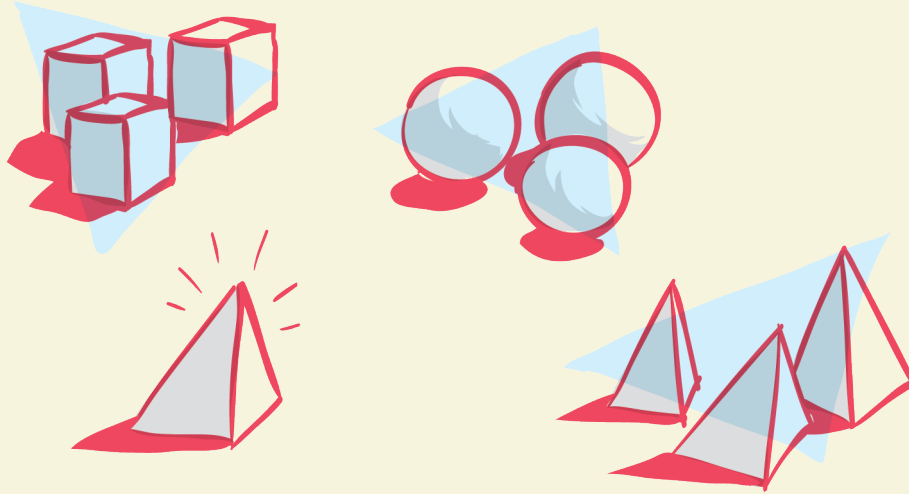


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13. Order Up

Students move around the classroom freely or in a classroom track pattern. You blow a whistle, clap your hands or give another signal, a certain number of times. Students form a group of that size. You blow the whistle again and students move freely again. Repeat. Alter the size of pairings or change the manner in which students pair up.

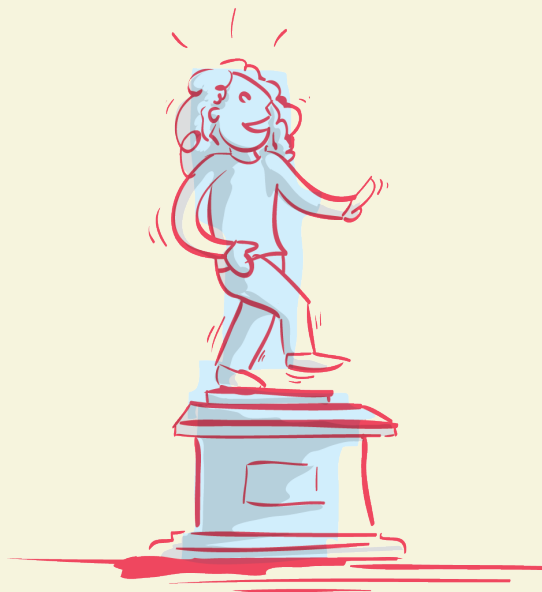


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14. Go-Stop

Students stand around the classroom freely. When you call out “go”, students move. When you call out “stop” students stop moving and freeze in place. Once they have performed it a couple of times change the orders and on your “go” students must stop and on your “stop” students must “go”. You can challenge them by adding “jump” or “squat”.

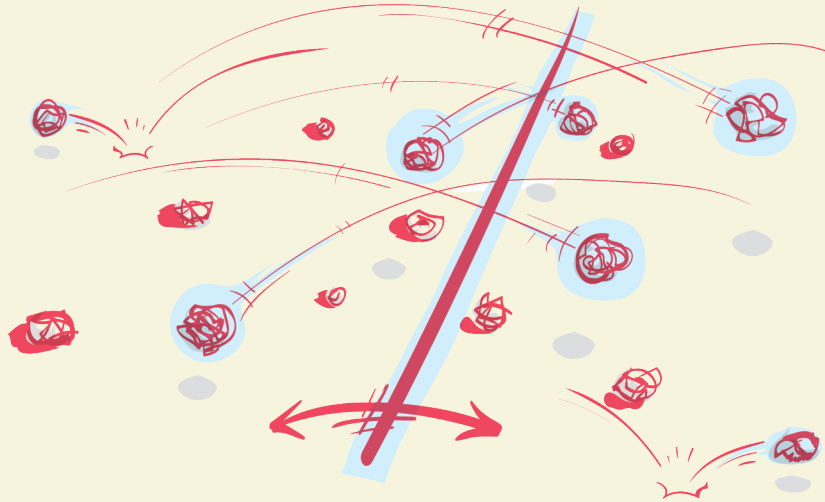


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15. Keep it Clean

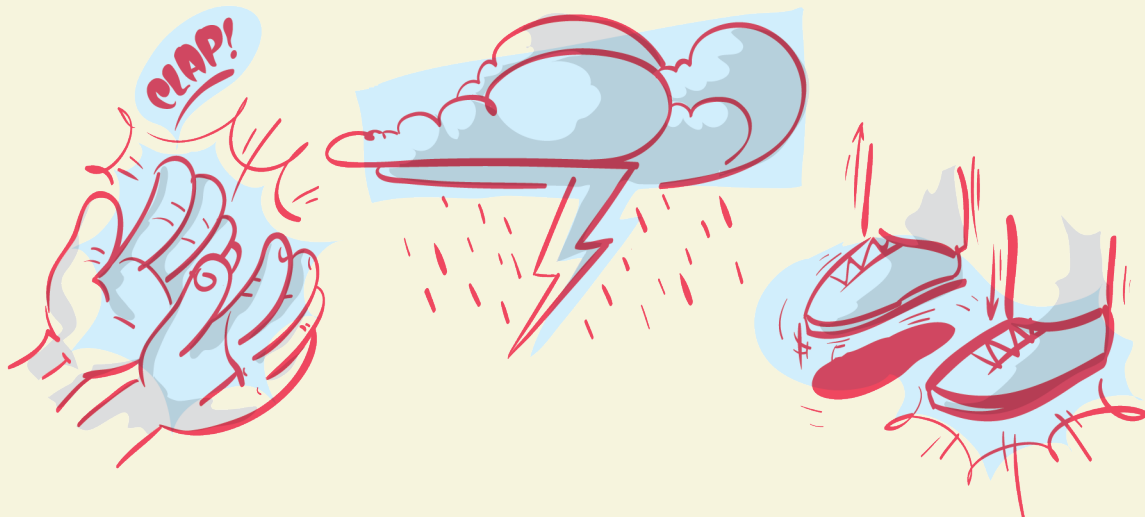
Push some chairs to the side and draw an imaginary line down the middle of the room. Give students several soft objects to throw (wadded up paper from the recycle bin works well). Students begin throwing objects across the line - the goal is to keep objects off of your side of the room. When you call "time" the cleanest side (the one with the fewest objects) wins. Do best 2 out of 3 for minute sessions.



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16. Rainstorm

Have a rainstorm in your classroom! Have students follow your lead; begin by having students very lightly rubbing their hands together, then lightly snap, slap their thighs, slap their thighs and stamp their feet (the rainstorm is at its peak!). Then stop stomping their feet, just slap their thighs, return to lightly snapping, rubbing their hands and stop. Do each action for 20 seconds.



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17. Feel the Beat

Have every student get a partner and sit cross legged on the floor facing their partner 2-3 feet away. Place a hacky-sac or other object between them. Turn on some music and have students perform the following actions to the beat of the music:



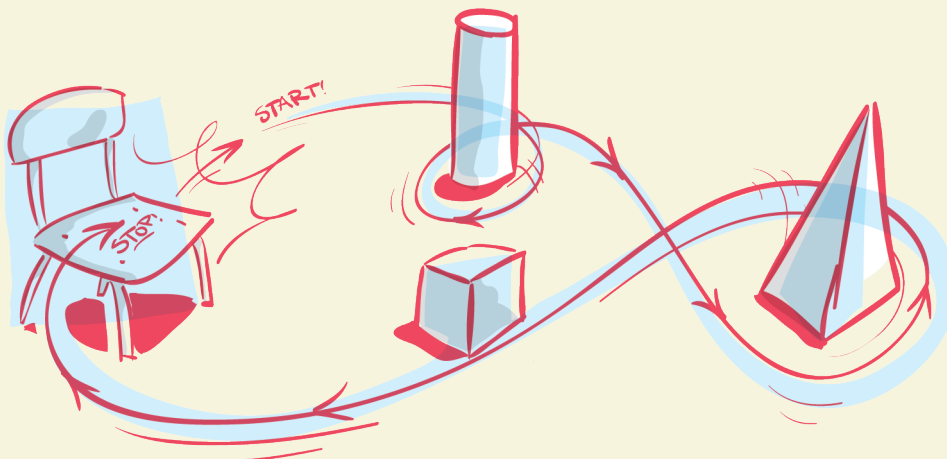
- Tap knees
- Tap shoulders
- Clap
- Tap knees, shoulders, clap
- Clap partners hands (both, right-right, left-left)

When the music stops, students try to be the first to grab the hacky-sac. Repeat 5 times.

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18. Sound the Alarm!

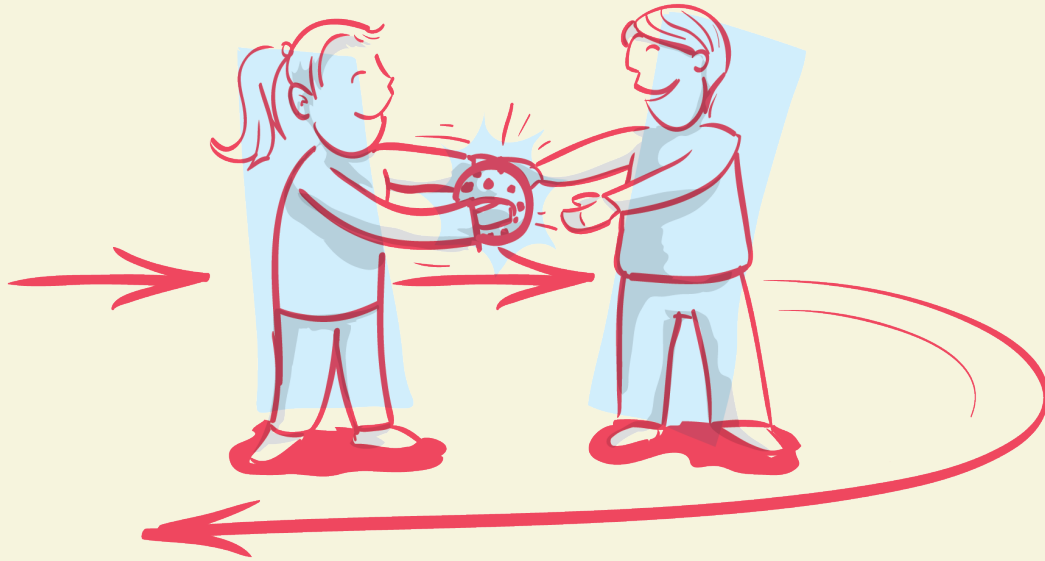
Create an alarm noise that triggers the students to get up and out of their chairs. Have them fast-pace walk it down the hall and out to an area commonly used for physical activity. They should run for 2 minutes and then fast pace it back to their chair.



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19. Handoff

Have students get in groups of 5 or 6. Each group stands in a straight line. The first person starts with a small ball or any other small object. On “go” the group sees how quickly they can pass the object down the line like a quarterback handing off to a running back. Repeat. You can change the way the object gets passed from one student to the other (under the legs, above the arms, from the right, from the left etc).



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20. 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.



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