

# Brain Builders



classroom



gymnasium



Action Schools! BC

4 - 7

Healthy Minds

Short movement breaks energize and activate the body and develop the brain. Actions accompanied by music help to develop coordination, rhythm, sequencing and listening skills. When we take a brain break, it refreshes our thinking and helps us discover another solution to a problem or see a situation through a different lens. During these few minutes, the brain moves away from learning, memorizing, and problem solving. Brain breaks actually helps to nurture and process new information.

**HEALTH  
COMPONENTS  
OF FITNESS**

ENDURANCE  
FLEXIBILITY  
STRENGTH

RUNNING  
SWINGING

**FUNDAMENTAL  
MOVEMENT  
SKILLS**

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



### BIG IDEAS

- Daily participation in physical activity at moderate to vigorous intensity levels benefits all aspects of our well-being (4).
- Daily physical activity enables us to practise skillful movement and helps us develop personal fitness (5-6).
- Physical literacy and fitness contribute to our success in and enjoyment of physical activity (6-7).

### CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES:

- Develop and apply a variety of fundamental movement skills in a variety of physical activities and environments (4-5).
- Develop, refine, and apply fundamental movement skills in a variety of physical activities and environments (6-7).
- Describe how students' participation in physical activities at school, at home, and in the community can influence their health and fitness (6-7).
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being.

## CONTENT

- Proper technique for fundamental movement skills, including non-locomotor, locomotor, and manipulative skills.
- Benefits of physical activity and exercise (4-5).
- How to participate in different types of physical activities, including individual and dual activities, rhythmic activities, and games.
- Effects of different types of physical activity on the body (7).
- Practices that promote health and well-being.

## FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS



- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's own actions.

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH CONNECTIONS



## RELATIONSHIPS AND ENVIRONMENTS

- Use an area where students can move around freely without bumping into each other or objects, such as a gymnasium, large classroom, or outdoor space.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Taking a few minutes in each class to allow students to move helps them to re-focus their thoughts, expend some energy, and have fun with their friends which can all help their learning potential.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Invite other classes in the school to participate in the activity.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

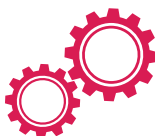
- Students follow school/class guidelines on how to speak and treat each other.

## EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES



- DVD and music player
- Balls, grippers, bean bags, scarves, exercise bands, footbags
- Water (bottles on desk)
- Stopwatch (optional)

## IMPLEMENTATION



- Use action breaks as brain builders.
- Use *Brain Energizers and Focusers* (included with this activity), or *Yoga, Stretching or Tai Chi* (available from [www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources)) to stimulate the brain or de-stress before a test or quiz.
- Try *Brain Gym* activities (included with this activity) – scarves are quiet and bean bags are safe and fun.
- Try *Juggling – Hand & Foot* (available from [www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources)).
- Sing the alphabet with names of animals rather than the letters while acting out the animal movements.
- Students can make a simple cup and ball game by attaching a short piece of string to a small ball and to a cup. The object of the game is to flip the ball into the air and catch it in the cup. The game is made easier or more difficult by the size of the cup relative to the ball. If the receptacle is small, the game becomes more difficult. If the cup is much larger than the ball, it is much easier to catch the ball.
- Explain to students the cup and ball game was enjoyed by many First Peoples children and adults. It was a diverting activity that helped children develop as hunters and care-givers.
- Share how these activities are very beneficial; they help lower stress levels during the day, it can help to focus their mental energy before and during class, it can help to increase their strength and endurance levels, it can help to practise movement patterns.
- Have students propose strategies of when to use this type of activity (e.g., When they are feeling stressed, before writing a test or quiz, after sitting for long periods of time, etc.). Have them set the goal to start with 60 to 90 seconds and build to five minutes.

## ACTION TIPS

- Play music to further stimulate the environment.

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure students warm up before the activity and cool down and stretch afterwards.
- Ensure teacher is present and can observe students at all times during the activity.
- Ensure students have enough space to move without bumping into objects or others.

## EXTENSION OF LEARNING

- On a blank sheet of paper, whiteboard, or Promethean Board, draw one squiggly line. Give students one minute to stand and draw with their opposite hand, turning the line into a picture or design of their choice.
- Give a set of three instructions, hop while counting the sequence to a partner for 30 seconds. Example: Count by two until 20, then count by three until 50, finishing with seven until 80. Switch and give the other partner another set of numbers to count.

# Brain Energizers and Focusers

Action Schools! BC

✓ gymnasium

✓ outside

4-7

Healthy Minds

## Brain Energizers

Allow 30 seconds for activities 1 to 6 and repeat 3 times. Then allow 60 seconds for activities 7 and 8.

### 1 Apple Picking

Fast pace; quick breathing. Stand in place; reach for the sky. Alternate with left hand and right knee up; then right hand and left knee up.

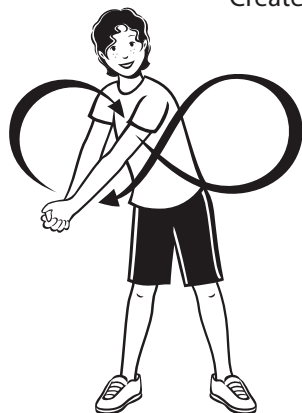


### 2 Run and Touch Scavenger Hunts

Fast pace; quick breathing. Find and touch 5 objects (colours, locations, etc.). Create variations on the theme.

### 3 Cross-Laterals

Moderate pace; slow, deep breathing. Stand in place, touch opposite elbows, then shoulders, knees, ankles, and hips. Create variations (e.g. elbows to knees or hand to foot behind body).

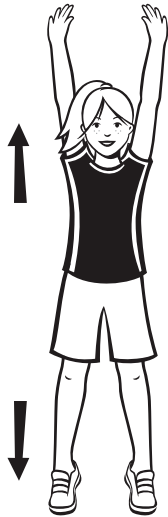


### 4 Infinity Move

Stand in place; slow deep breathing. Clasp hands in front; now soar left and right, high and low, making horizontal figure eights.

Adapted with permission. Jensen, E. Learning with the Body in Mind, 2000.

# Brain Focusers

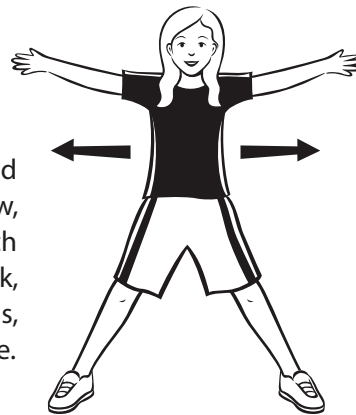


## 5 Sky Stretchers

Stand in place; slow, deep breathing. Slowly stretch upwards. First raise arms, then stretch and rise up onto the toes. Hold for 5 seconds, then release.

## 6 Mind Openers

Stand in place with legs spread as wide as possible; take slow, deep breaths. Slowly stretch arms to the side; arch back, extend and hold for 5 seconds, then release.



## 7 Circulation Boosters

Sit with legs stretched out in a relaxing position. Using both hands, gently massage eyes, ears, and forehead. Inhale and exhale with slow, deep breaths.

## 8 Mind Calmers

Sit with legs crossed and hands clasped. Inhale slowly; exhale slowly.



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# Brain Gym Bean Bag Stunts

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4-7

✓ gymnasium

✓ outside



## 1 Under the Leg and In the Air

- Bean bag in right hand. Lift right leg and toss bean bag under and up.
- Catch with right hand. Repeat 10 times. Repeat with left side.
- Lift right leg and toss bean bag with right hand under, up and over to the left hand to catch. Repeat with opposite side. Repeat 10 times.
- Lift right leg, cross midline with left hand and toss bean bag under leg. Catch with right hand.



## 4 Over the Falls

- Right hand drops the bean bag over the right shoulder.
- Left hand catches bean bag behind the back.
- Repeat with the left hand.

## 5 Behind the Scenes

- Left foot steps forward.
- Right hand tosses bean bag up, over and behind the head.
- Left hand reaches behind and catches bean bag.
- Repeat, starting with right foot forward and left hand tossing.
- Watch the bean bag as it goes up and over.

## 2 Rainbow Toss

- Toss bean bag from hand to hand above the head. Arms at shoulder height.
  - start with head and eyes following,
  - then head stationary and eyes following,
  - then focus on a point on the ceiling and watch the bean bag in your peripheral vision, and
  - then toss and catch with eyes closed.

## 3 Orange Drop

- Face a partner with arms outstretched in front.
- Hands level, palms down.
- First person drops the bean bag.
- Partner quickly squats and catches the bean bag.

## 6 Head to Feet

- Place bean bag on head.
- Tilt head to drop bean bag.
- Catch it with a foot or on a knee.
- Alternate feet or knees.
- Can be done to the back.



Adapted from [www.movementandlearning.com.au](http://www.movementandlearning.com.au)

# More Bean Bag Stunts

- 1 Throw and catch with both hands then one hand. Throw high, throw low, throw in the front and back.
- 2 Throw, touch the ground, catch.
- 3 Throw, turn around (and touch the ground), catch.
- 4 Throw, clap, cross touch shoulders, touch head, catch. Count how many actions can be performed before catching.
- 5 Throw and catch in different positions (sitting, lying, kneeling). For example: lie down, throw, stand up and catch or assume a crab walk position; throw with one hand, catch with the other.
- 6 Stand with legs apart, reach high, drop the bean bag behind the body. Catch bean bag by bending forward and reaching between the legs.
- 7 Stand astride, place bean bag on head, tilt head forward. Pick up bean bag keeping legs straight and feet still.

# Bean Bags and Discs or Scarves

- 1 Place bean bag on disc, flip disc and catch bean bag with other hand (or disc).
- 2 Place bean bag on foot, flip up and catch with disc.
- 3 Play catch with a partner, catching with a disc.
- 4 Repeat above using a scarf.
- 5 Invent variations and share them with the class.

Adapted from Ever Active ... Everywhere, Bean Bag Stunts