

Take A Break And Move!

How much movement do your students get during the school day? Do they get to move their bodies at times other than recess or PE? Inspired Teachers know that students' brains and bodies need to move throughout the school day, and that requiring students to sit still is counter-productive to learning (and to students' health). Fortunately, nearly every classroom transition offers an opportunity for students to move. This challenge offers suggestions for creating movement-based transitions.

What you will need:

Time estimate: 1-3 minutes per day, for a week or more

Materials: None!

Directions:

1. Look at your class's daily schedule. Where are the transitions - both to and from the classroom, and within the classroom?
2. Each day for a week, choose one or two transitions *within the classroom*, e.g., breaks between lessons or rotations between centers. Replace your typical transition routine with one that emphasizes movement. Choose a type of movement that works within your space and with the ages of your students. Below, are some movement-based transition ideas to get you started.
 - Form a line that wiggles like a snake when rotating to a new center.
 - Shake each hand and each foot, one at a time, and count-down aloud from 5 to 0.
 - Tiptoe, march, "swim," or hop on one foot between centers.
 - Sing and dance a round of "Head, Shoulders, Knees Toes,"
 - Opposites game: Say a word and students use their bodies to show the opposite. (Include students in choosing the words, too.)
 - Move to the next station as silently as possible.
 - Match Me game: Silently move your body in various configurations, such as wiggling your fingers or stretching your arms overhead, and students follow. (Give students chances to be the leader in this game.)

Note: We want to offer a few practical considerations for this challenge: If your students are not used to movement in the classroom, it may be challenging to communicate to them that they are allowed and encouraged to move, *and* that they are responsible for ensuring they move safely and respect each other and the space. You may need to set up norms and expectations as you introduce movement-based transitions. If you've build your classroom around mutual respect and include a practice of discussing and revisiting rules, your students will be able to handle this challenge. Additionally, modify your movements as necessary to be inclusive of students with limited mobility or sensory challenges.

3. As you and your students become accustomed to the routines of movement-based transitions, start to use movement as part of every transition.
4. Then go further: Do a physical warm-up with your students before a test, before an important project that will require them to focus, or on a regular day, or everyday. Ready for more? Invite students to plan and lead warm-ups and movement-based transitions.

Resources

Here are some online sources for movement break ideas:

- <http://standupkids.org/movement-break/>
- <https://www.gonoodle.com/>
- <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/1252-brain-breaks-instant-recess-and-energizers>