

Fit Sticks Companion Sheet

Activity breaks^{1,2}:

- improve academic success.
- improve school attendance.
- reduce disciplinary problems.
- improve concentration and cognitive performance.
- help to develop lifelong healthy behaviors and improve student wellness.



Reminders: Please be sure there is plenty of space for movement. Be aware of student health restrictions. Allow for activity modifications.



Heart Pumping (30 seconds to 1 minute increments)

- 1) **Jumping Side to Side** - arms out for balance
- 2) **Shoulder Blasts** - hold arms straight out to the sides. Make arm circles forward (start with small circles, then gradually larger circles). Reverse direction and make arm circles backward (large circles, then gradually smaller circles). Raise your arms in front of your body and move your arms up and down. Raise your arm above your head and wave them side to side, like a windshield wiper.
- 3) **Jog in Place** – heels up
- 4) **High Knees Jog** – touch palm to knee
- 5) **Jumping Jacks**
- 6) **Imaginary Jump Rope** – as if you have a jump rope, try double jumps, try a spin
- 7) **Hop on One Foot** – switch legs, try to turn in a circle
- 8) **Right Elbow to Left Knee** – alternate knees and elbows
- 9) **March in Place; Punch Arms Up Overhead**

Mind Strengthening (1 minute to 3 minute increments)

- 1) **Mindful Breathing** - Close eyes. Breathe. Feel your breath. Where do you notice it? (Do you feel air moving in and out of your nose? Your mouth? Can you feel your chest rise and fall with each breath? Can you feel your stomach fill with air and empty?). Continue focusing on the breath.
- 2) **Starfish** – Close eyes. Spread one hand open like a starfish. Gently trace each “starfish” finger with the index finger of your other hand. Take your time. Switch hands after a bit.
- 3) **Breath Counting** – Close eyes. Breathe. Count how long it takes to breath in and how long it takes to release the air. Repeat.
- 4) **Imagine Favorite Place** – Visualization Exercise: Close eyes. Picture a place you like to spend time. What does it look like? What does it smell like? How does it make you feel? Imagine you are there. What are you doing? Allow yourself to spend some time in this favorite place.
- 5) **Body Scan** – Sit with hands relaxed in lap. Close eyes. Take three deep breaths allowing your body to fully relax. With each breath, picture the air going to a different part of the body. Notice the sensations in each part of the body. What do you feel? Tingling, warmth, coolness or pressure? Move to each part of the body scanning from your head to your toes (head, face, neck, shoulders,

torso, arms, hands, hips, legs, feet). Once the whole body is scanned, wiggle your fingers and toes and slowly open your eyes; bringing awareness to the whole body.

- 6) **Heartbeat Scan** – First do one minute of heart pumping exercise. Then sit. Close your eyes. Place your hand over your heart. Feel your heartbeat. Where else do you feel your heart beat? What about your breath? Listen to the beat. Follow it.

Body Stretching and Balance (30 seconds to 2 minute increments)

- 1) **Cobblers Pose/Butterfly Pose** - Sit on the floor. Slowly bring bottom of feet towards each other and towards the body. Hold. Release. Repeat.
- 2) **Plank/Forearm Plank** – Hands flat on the floor. Hands shoulder-width apart. Arms straight. Back flat. Hold. Release. Repeat. More advanced is to move onto forearms to hold position.
- 3) **Arm Balance** – Begin in plank position. Lift one arm up and turn your body sideways so that your body looks like the letter T. Hold. Switch sides. Repeat.
- 4) **Flying Bird** – Stand first. Stretch one leg out behind you. Arms can be by your side, out in front, or out to the side. Hold. Switch.
- 5) **Rag Doll Pose** – Stand first. Lean forward and let your body weight slowly shift so that your head moves toward the ground. Hold. Release. Slowly stand. Repeat.
- 6) **One Leg Lift/Tree Pose** – Stand first. Lift one leg at a time (ankle forward or knee up). Balance. Hold. Switch. More advanced can try tree pose - arms go up while the bottom of one foot rests on the inside of the other leg.
- 7) **Sky Reaches** – Stand up. Swing arms up to the sky. Rise up on tip toes. Hold. Release. Repeat.
- 8) **Sit on Floor and Touch Toes** – Sit on the floor. With only a slight bend in knees, slowly reach to touch toes or just beyond. Hold. Release. Repeat.

Muscle Building (30 seconds to 2 minute increments)

- 1) **Tip Toe Lift** - Slowly raise up on your tip toes. Hold. Release. Repeat. Try one foot at a time.
- 2) **Front/Back Lunges** – Keep your body straight and chin up. Tighten core (stomach). Step forward, lowering both knees until each are at 90 degrees. [Don't allow knee to touch floor.] Hold. Switch direction. Switch legs.
- 3) **Side/Side Lunges** – Keep your body straight and chin up. Tighten core (stomach). Step to the side. Lunge toward the floor. Make sure your knee does not extend past your toes.
- 4) **Push Ups** – Start in plank (knees touching ground or straight). Try to raise and lower body.
- 5) **Boat Pose** – Begin seated with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hands resting beside your hips. Keeping your spine straight, lean back slightly and lift your feet, bringing your shins parallel to the floor. Draw in your low back, lift your chest, and lengthen the front of your torso. Balance on your sit bones, keeping your spine straight.
- 6) **Chair Pose** – With feet together or hip width apart, inhale arms forward parallel to the floor with the palms facing down. Exhale and bend the knees, squatting down. Reach the hips down and back as if you were going to sit on the edge of a chair, bringing your weight to the heels of the feet. Hold.
- 7) **Crunches** – Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Place your hands behind your head so your thumbs are behind your ears. Don't lace your fingers together. Tilt your chin slightly, leaving a few inches of space between your chin and your chest. Gently pull your abdominals inward. Curl up forward. Hold. Release.
- 8) **Squats** - Stand with your legs a little wider than shoulder-width apart. Hold your arms out in front of your body. Slowly bend your knees and squat down until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Rise up slowly.

References

1. Active Living Research. Improving Physical Activity and Food Awareness in North Carolina Childcare Centers: Preventing Obesity by Design | Active Living Research. <https://www.activelivingresearch.org/taxonomy/schools>. Accessed August 9, 2018.
2. Physical Activity. Choose MyPlate. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/physical-activity>. Published December 21, 2017. Accessed August 9, 2018.
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