

Brain Energizers

Quick & Easy Classroom Physical Activities-
For Younger Kids



Studies show students can benefit both physically and academically from physical activity breaks*:

- **Helps meet recommended daily physical activity requirements**
- **Reduces sedentary behavior during the school day**
- **Helps to improve academic scores**
- **Betters school attendance with fewer disciplinary problems**
- **Improves concentration skills and cognitive performance**
- **Develops lifelong healthy behaviors**

*source: Active Living research/ Robert Woods Johnson Foundation

Teacher directions:

This booklet is broken down into weekly exercise routines for the school year. Each routine includes five (5) very simple exercises that students and staff can do while standing (blue) in front of their desk or sitting (green) in a chair. Each exercise routine is coupled with a nutrition message to share with students. We suggest using these exercises 2-4 times a day when possible.

Week 1

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Tap right toes in front, to the side, then back
10	Tap left toes in front, to the side, then back
10	Touch: toe then knee then overhead
10	Jump while turning around in a circle
10	Knee lifts

Nutrition Discussion: MyPlate

MyPlate is divided into sections for veggies, fruits, grains, and high-protein foods. It also includes a circle on the side for dairy. Each section varies in color: green for veggies, red for fruits, orange for grains, purple for protein, and blue for dairy. You can visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to create an eating plan just for you.

Week 2

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Hands on hips, criss-cross legs in and out
10	Left leg pointed out, write A-M with big toe
10	Right leg pointed out, write N-Z with big toe
10	Touch opposite elbow to knee
10	Arms forward, criss-cross over and under

Nutrition Discussion: MyPlate

MyPlate shows the five food groups using a familiar mealtime visual, a place setting. The five colored sections represent the five food groups that we should eat each day. Each section varies in size- we need more of the foods with the bigger sections, such as vegetables and grains.

Week 3

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Right leg lift to the side
10	Left leg lift to the side
10	Hands on hips, knee lifts
10	Hands on hips, step right then step left
10	Stand up sit down quickly

Nutrition Discussion: Grain Group

The orange section on MyPlate represents the Grains Group. Grains come from plants like wheat, corn, rice and oats. They are used to make foods like bread, cereal, rice, pasta, crackers, oatmeal, tortillas and popcorn.

Week 4

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Lift right leg and make ankle circles
10	Lift left leg and make ankle circles
10	Lift left leg, clap under leg, repeat with right leg
10	Sit in chair, hold seat and pull knees to chest
10	Raise and lower heels

Nutrition Discussion: Grain Group

Grains are an important source of fuel for your body. Whole grains are a better source of fiber and other nutrients. Look for the words “whole grain” on the food label and make half your grains whole.

Week 5

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	On tip toes – lift and lower
10	Kick your heels up to tap your bottom
10	Hands together over head, slowly lower and raise
10	Arms out, raise right toes to ceiling, hold and balance
10	Arms out, raise left toes to ceiling, hold and balance

Nutrition Discussion: Fiber

Fiber is found in plant products such as grains, vegetables and fruit. Fiber works like a scrub brush to keep our digestive system/ “food tube” clean and running smoothly.

Week 6

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Touch toes, then knees, then over head
10	Alternate: Touch left toe with right hand then right toe with left
10	Right leg kick forward
10	Left leg kick forward
10	Hold chair, pull knees to chest

Nutrition Discussion: Vegetable Group

The green section on MyPlate represents the Vegetable Group. It's one of the largest sections on the plate. Vegetables provide many vitamins, minerals and fiber needed for good health. It's important to eat a variety of different colored veggies every day.

Week 7

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Alternate: Touch opposite hand to foot
10	Touch: Toe then knee then shoulder
10	Hands on hips, hop on both feet
10	Balance on left foot
10	Balance on right foot

Nutrition Discussion: Vegetable Group

Vegetables can come in many different forms: fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable juice. Our taste buds change over time, and sometimes it takes up to 15 times for our taste buds to decide if we like a new food. Make it a goal to try new vegetables!

Week 8

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Touch toes, then knees, then over head
10	Stand up, jump and sit down
10	Opposite elbow-to-knee touch
10	Hands on shoulders, squeeze & touch elbows together
10	Upright posture & hands on shoulders, gently twist at the waist

Nutrition Discussion: Fruit Group

The red section on MyPlate represents the Fruit Group. Fruits are good sources of vitamins like A and C. Vitamin A helps us see in the dark. Vitamin C helps our cuts to heal and our bodies to recover from a cold and flu faster.

Week 9

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Hands on hips, hop on both feet
10	Hands on hips, squeeze abs then lift left knee then right
10	Kick your heels up to tap your bottom
10	Jump and shake your whole body
10	Feet together, hop on one foot and then the other

Nutrition Discussion: Fruit Group

Eat a rainbow of different colored fruits. Each color does a different job in our body. When you eat a rainbow of colors you can help your body get all the vitamins and minerals you need.

Week 10

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Touch toes, then knees, then over head
10	Lift left leg, clap under leg, lower, repeat
10	Lift right leg, clap under leg, lower, repeat
10	March feet and punch arms over head
10	Sit up tall, reach and touch toes

Nutrition Discussion: Fruit Group

Fruit can come in many forms such as fresh, canned, frozen, dried or 100% fruit juice. Look for a new fruit to try next time you are at the grocery store or farmers' market.

Week 11

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	March in place and punch arms out front
10	Hands on hips, step left then right, fast
10	Jump and shake your whole body
10	Arms overhead-move arms far left, then right
10	Bend forward & reach for toes, hold

Nutrition Discussion: Fruit & Vegetables

Doing something as simple as eating more fruits and vegetables everyday can help reduce your risk of many diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.

Week 12

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Punch arms up above shoulders
10	Right leg kick forward
10	Left leg kick forward
10	Hands on hips, gently bend side-to-side
10	Hands on shoulders, squeeze & touch elbows together

Nutrition Discussion: Dairy Group

The blue circle on the side of MyPlate represents the Dairy Group. The Dairy Group includes foods such as low-fat milk, cheese and yogurt. It also includes low-fat milk alternatives, such as soy milk. Students need 3 or more servings of foods within the Dairy Group every day.

Week 13

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	March in place and punch arms out front
10	Jump in place
10	Jump while turning around in a circle
10	Jump and shake your whole body
10	Sit on the floor and try to touch your toes

Nutrition Discussion: Dairy Group

Dairy foods contain a mineral called calcium. Calcium helps to build strong bones and teeth. Remember, students need 3 or more servings of calcium-rich foods each day.

Week 14

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Alternate, lift leg and clap underneath
10	March feet and punch arms overhead
10	Alternate: Touch left toe w/right hand then right toe w/left without bending your legs
10	Hands on hips, criss-cross legs in and out
10	Arms out from sides: Make giant circles, reverse & make small circles.

Nutrition Discussion: Dairy Group

Fat-free milk and 1% milk have all the vitamins and minerals your body needs to build strong bones without the added fat found in 2% or whole milk. Try gradually switching to lower fat milk for better health.

Week 15

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Alternate: touch opposite hand to foot
10	March in place and punch arms out front
10	Hands on hips, touch right toe, lift up, touch left toe
10	Pretend jump rope
10	Arms overhead – move arms far left, then right

Nutrition Discussion: Protein Group

The purple section on MyPlate represents the Protein Group. The Protein Group contains foods from both plants and animals. Examples include: meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, peas, eggs, nuts, lentils and seeds.

Week 16

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Take a big breath in and slowly blow it out
10	Touch, toes, then knees, then overhead
10	Use right leg only, stand up, sit down
10	Use left leg only, stand up, sit down
10	Sit in chair, hold seat and pull knees to chest

Nutrition Discussion: Protein Group

Protein is a nutrient essential for your body to function. This nutrient helps build and repair body tissue, such as muscles and organs. Choose lean portions or low-fat options and keep the skin off.

Week 17

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Stick your right foot out and shake it
10	Stick your left foot out and shake it
10	Jump and shake your whole body
10	Spread legs, point toes out, lower & lift
10	Stand on tip toes, hold

Nutrition Discussion: Fat & Oils

An important nutrient also comes from Fats & Oils. Fats & Oils are not a food group but foods we need in small amounts. Examples include nuts, seeds, butter, oils, olives, some fish and avocados.

Week 18

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Take in a deep breath and slowly blow it out
10	Arm circles forward
10	Arm circles backward
10	Seated in chair make right ankle circles
10	Seated in chair make left ankle circles

Nutrition Discussion: Discretionary Calories

Discretionary Calories are “sometimes foods”. These foods don't have enough nutrients to fit into the Five Food Groups but are okay to have once in a while but not every day. Examples include soda, candy, cookies, chips, cake and donuts.

Week 19

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	March feet and punch arms overhead
10	Alternate: Right elbow to left knee & switch
10	Kick your heels up to tap your bottom
10	Take ten steps in a circle
10	On tip toes, hold

Nutrition Discussion: Water

Up to 75% of our body is made up of water. Our bodies need water to stay hydrated and work properly. When your body does not have enough water it is called *dehydration*. It is important to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

Week 20

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Take in a deep breath and slowly blow it out
10	Arms forward, criss-cross over and under
10	Raise and lower heels
10	Stretch and touch left foot with both hands, repeat with right
10	Touch toes, then knees, then overhead

Nutrition Discussion: Water

To prevent dehydration and heat illness, it is important to drink water before, during and after physical activity. This is especially important during the hot summer months.

Week 21

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Jump while turning around in a circle
10	Run in place
10	Pretend jump rope
10	Kick your heels to tap your bottom
10	Sit on the floor and try to touch your toes

Nutrition Discussion: Nutrition Facts Labels

Think of Nutrition Facts labels like the table of contents of a book. It tells you what's inside the food you are eating. It's important to read it before you eat it so you know the nutritional value of the food.

Week 22

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Hands on hips, criss-cross legs in and out
10	March your feet
10	Touch toes, then knees, then over head
10	Sit up tall, arms out to sides, use arms & make small circles
10	Hold chair, pull knees to chest

Nutrition Discussion: Calories

A calorie is a measure of how much energy is stored in a food. It tells us how much energy your body could get from eating the food. The amount of calories in a food is listed on the food label.

Week 23

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Hands on hips, step right then step left
10	Left foot flexed, lift and lower leg
10	Right foot flexed, lift and lower leg
10	Squat as if sitting in a chair, hold
10	Bend, reach for your toes, hold

Nutrition Discussion: Food Label Ingredients

Ingredients are listed from the largest amount to the least amount by weight. When something is listed first, second, or third, you know that this food probably contains a lot of it. The food will contain smaller amounts of the ingredients mentioned at the end of the list.

Week 24

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Sitting</u>
10	Right leg kick forward
10	Left leg kick forward
10	Lift left leg, clap under leg, lower, repeat
10	Lift right leg, clap under leg, lower, repeat
10	Punch arms above shoulders

Nutrition Discussion: Sugary Drinks

Drinks high in sugar, such as soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks should be limited. These drinks contain little to no nutritional value. Instead include such drinks as water, 100% fruit juice, and low-fat milk- all choices that are very nutrient rich.

Week 25

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Alternate: Right elbow to left knee & switch
10	Hands on hips, step left then step right, fast
10	Stand up sit down, fast
10	Squat as if sitting in a chair, hold
10	Feet together, hop side-to-side

Nutrition Discussion: Balancing Food & Activity

Balance good food choices using MyPlate with regular physical activity of 60 minutes or more a day. Activity helps you to maintain a healthy weight and feel good.

Week 26

Repetitions	Activity Break Routine: <u>Standing</u>
10	Touch your head, shoulders, knees & toes.
10	Hands on hips, left leg knee lifts
10	Hands on hips, right leg knee lifts
10	Hand on hips, feet together, hop side to side
10	Hands on hips, lunge alternate left and right

Nutrition Discussion: MyPlate

No one food group is more important than the other. We need ALL the food groups in different amounts to build a healthy body. Don't forget to go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to create a personalized eating plan just for you.



**Maricopa County
Public Health**
Office of Nutrition & Physical Activity



For more information or resources, please contact
Maricopa County Department of Public Health Office of Nutrition and Physical Activity:

Email: nutrition@mail.maricopa.gov

Phone: 602.506.FOOD

Online: www.MaricopaSchoolWellness.org

Adapted with permission from JAM School Program www.jamschoolprogram.com and www.choosemyplate.gov

Disclaimer: Please be advised the exercises hereunder may not be suitable for everyone, in every age, and this or any other exercise program may result in injury. To reduce the risk of injury all children should consult their doctor before beginning this or any exercise program. The exercises presented herein are in no way intended as a substitute for medical counseling.

This material was federally funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through the Arizona Nutrition Network. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 1-800-352-8401. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.