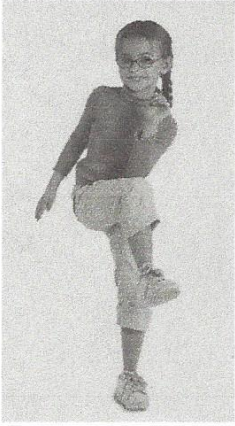

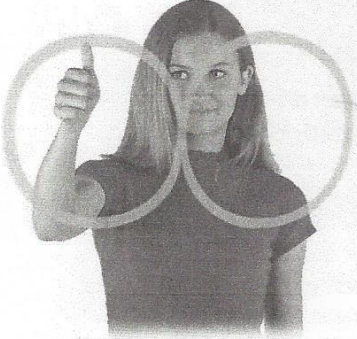


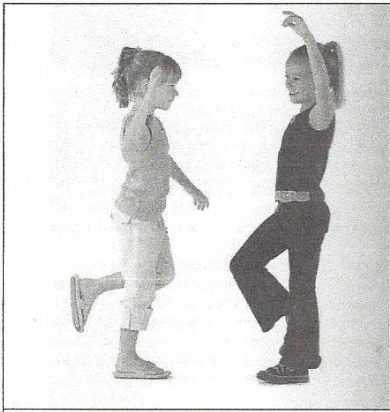
EDUCATIONAL KINESIOLOGY ("Edu-K")

BRAIN GYM® ACTIVITIES THAT HELP CHILDREN CALM DOWN, FOCUS, AND IMPROVE ACADEMIC LEARNING

Movement is natural for children. Sitting in chairs for hours at a time is not. Brain Gym® activities bring structured movement to the classroom to promote right-left brain coordination and self-regulation through structured play, sensory-motor control and cognitive learning. Teachers and parents report that children's reading comprehension and math scores improve dramatically, test taking is less stressful, and children, particularly those who do not get sufficient indoor/outdoor play time or are fidgety or disruptive, are more likely to calm down, listen and focus on academic learning when these activities are incorporated regularly in the classroom.

Here are some of my favorite Brain Gym movements.

	<p>CROSS CRAWL: Stand with feet hip-width apart, legs straight, toes pointing straight ahead. Take 3 deep breaths. Touch your left elbow to your right knee. Touch your right elbow to your left knee. Alternate these movements for about a minute. Variation: Bending from the waist*, touch your left hand to your right toe. Touch your right hand to your left toe. (*You can do these activities while standing or sitting in a chair.) Variation for time constraints: Stand, twist the upper body left and right 10 times with eyes open or closed. Any movement that crosses the midline of the body helps right-left brain coordination.</p>
	<p>NECK ROLL: Stand nice and straight, shoulders down, like a tree top reaching for the sky. Take 3 deep breaths. Gently let your chin fall forward down to your chest. (Do not strain.) Gently roll the top of your head to the right as if the tree top is moving in a soft gentle breeze. Gently roll the top of your head back to the center with your chin still close to your chest and then roll the top of your head in the opposite direction. [Do not let the head roll toward the back.] Repeat the movements gently back and forth for a minute.</p>
	<p>LAZY 8's: Stand straight and take 3 deep breaths. Supports eye movement skills and strengthening. Stand still with no movement of the head or body. Take 3 deep breaths and relax. At eye level, draw a lazy eight on its side (infinity symbol) with one thumb. Repeat 3 times. Use the opposite hand/thumb and repeat the activity 3 times. Finally, put both the (right and left hand) thumbs together and repeat the activity 3 times.</p>



RIGHT-LEFT MARCH:

Stand straight and take 3 deep breaths.

Raise the left arm and right leg at the same time.

Raise the right arm and left leg at the same time.

Repeat 10 times.

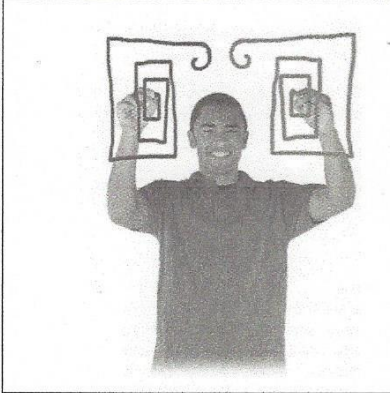
Variation:

Have two partners face one another and raise opposite arms and legs as if in a mirror.

Variation:

Do this activity to music and when you stop the music (as in musical chairs) students are to freeze and see if they can remain balanced on the one foot.

Or, do this activity in Tai Chi style slow motion to improve balance.



DOUBLE DOODLE

Stand straight and take 3 deep breaths. Relax the eyes and neck.

Shoulders down and hands in the air.

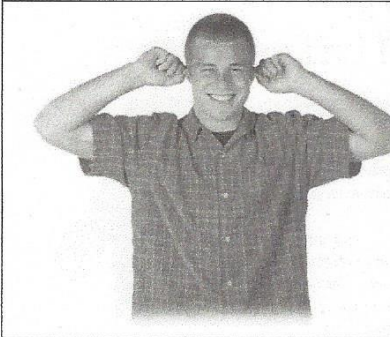
Draw simultaneous mirror images on an imaginary wall, easel, or chalk board.

Draw circles, triangles, or other interesting shapes like stars, hearts, faces, trees.

Variation:

Do this activity on a real piece of paper or chalk/white board.

Do this activity sitting in a chair with your feet.



THINKING CAP:

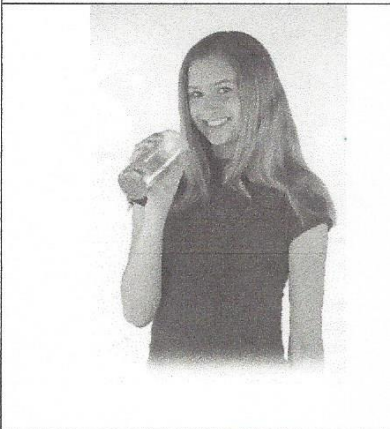
Stand and take 3 deep breaths. Relax.

Use your thumbs and index fingers to gently massage your ears from the top down to around your ear lobes.

Repeat 3 times.

Variation:

For right-left brain engagement and coordination, cross the midline of the body by simultaneously using the right hand to massage the left ear, and your left hand to massage the right ear.



SIPPING WATER:

Water makes up 80% of our body weight at birth and 70% of an adult's body weight. Since our bodily systems are electrical, water is the universal solvent essential for the necessary electrical transmissions to the nervous system that maintain the electrical potential that makes us sensing, learning, thinking, acting organisms. There is an observable correlation between sipping water, good cognitive function and emotional calm. The average daily water loss for humans through natural body processes is about two and a half quarts (ten glasses). Sipping water is an effective way to restore hydration and is best absorbed by the body when taken in frequent small amounts to improve our level of energy and vitality.

Classrooms (teachers & students) benefit from water sipping breaks and restroom visits.

Excerpted from "Brain Gym®: Teacher's Edition", by Paul E. and Gail E. Dennison.

See also: Brain Gym International

Summarized by Jeannette Holtham for Youth Transformation Center's Restorative Justice Practices