Ten short indoor workouts for kids on a rainy day

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Ten quiet workouts a child can do in a living room, each under ten minutes with the warm-up, most needing nothing but a wall. By age, from preschool to 6th grade.

On a day when nobody can go outside, a child can still get a proper bit of movement in a space the size of a rug. These ten workouts from Peabody's Gym each take under ten minutes from warm-up to cool-down, make no noise the flat downstairs would hear, and need nothing more than a wall, a towel or a ball. They are sorted by age, youngest first, and each link goes to a page where a drawn figure shows every move and Coach Peabody reads it out.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is a free learning site, free through the end of 2026. When the moving is done, the library has stories at every reading level, and our rainy day activities for kids page has the rest of the afternoon.

Why short is fine

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans ask children aged 6 to 17 for 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous activity a day, with muscle- and bone-strengthening on three of those days, and they ask for activities that are enjoyable and varied. Nothing says it has to come in one go; we wrote about how it adds up across a day. On a wet Saturday the hour will not come from one workout, but a short one before lunch and another after is a real part of it, and it breaks up a day indoors.

For preschool and kindergarten

1. Animal Parade (ages 4 to 6, nothing needed). Crawl like a bear, scuttle like a crab, march, tiptoe, stand on one leg like a flamingo and jog, three times round. Nobody counts anything. This is the one to start with.

2. Waddle and Kick (ages 5 to 6, nothing needed). Be a duck, then a donkey, four times round, with a bear crawl and a one-leg balance between.

3. Teddy Bear Carry (ages 5 to 6, a ball). Pick a ball up off the floor the proper way, crawl, march and bridge. It is the youngest version of lifting something safely, which is a skill worth learning before anyone hands them anything heavier.

For 1st to 3rd grade

4. Three Minute Shake-Out (ages 6 to 9). Squats, jogging on the spot, a plank and a bridge, three rounds. Done before anyone has thought about it.

5. Desk Side Three (ages 6 to 9, nothing needed). Squats, jogging, marching, a superman and a plank, beside a table or a desk, without moving any furniture.

6. Carpet Three (ages 6 to 9). Wall push-ups, squats, a plank and a crab walk on one bit of carpet. The quietest strength workout in the Gym.

7. Morning Stretch (ages 6 to 9). Six slow stretches, nothing counting. A good first thing on a slow morning.

8. Before Bed Stretch (ages 6 to 9). Six slow stretches to wind down at the other end of the day.

For 4th to 6th grade

9. Twenty On, Ten Off (ages 9 to 12). Twenty seconds of high knees or jogging on the spot, ten seconds of rest, eight times. Four minutes, and they will feel every one. Done with soft feet, it is quieter than it sounds.

10. Long Legs (ages 9 to 12, a towel). Seven stretches for legs that have been folded on a sofa all day. A good one to pair with number 9.

Making it work indoors

- Clear a rug's worth of floor. Nothing sharp or glass where hands and feet go, and bare feet or grippy shoes rather than socks on a smooth floor. Every workout page lists its own cautions before it starts.
- Let them pick from two. Choosing is half the fun, and a child who chose the workout is more likely to finish it.
- Do one with them. Children copy. A grown-up doing Animal Parade badly is the best advert for it there is.
- Add a game. Every workout in the Gym for the younger ages ends with one, because a session that ends with a game is one a child wants to repeat. Balloon Keep-Up, Sock Basketball and the Dice Workout are all made for a room.
- Print a few. The Gym's printables turn every workout into a card for a box on the shelf, with a dice sheet for when the cards run out.
- Know when to stop. Dizzy, chest pain, can't catch their breath, a sharp hurt in one spot, or feeling sick: stop, sit down and rest. Every workout page says so before the clock starts.

If you have more room, a hallway or a staircase, exercises for kids at home has the rest of the Gym sorted by how much space each one needs.

Sources

- Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition (2018), US Department of Health and Human Services — 60 minutes or more a day for ages 6 to 17, muscle- and

bone-strengthening on at least three days, and activities that are age-appropriate, enjoyable and varied. Executive summary read at odphp.health.gov, 31 October 2026.
• The workouts, their ages, minutes and equipment are read from Peabody's own Gym library (lib/gym) on 31 October 2026.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/ten-short-indoor-workouts-for-a-rainy-day