Brain breaks for kids

Peabody · checked 2026-10-29

A brain break is two to five minutes of movement between lessons, and it works because sitting still is what children are worst at. Peabody has 12 short quiet workouts and 20 quiet games that need no equipment, no space beyond a desk, and make no noise a classroom next door would hear.

12 short, quiet movement breaks

- Break: Animal Parade · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 4 to 6 · You need: nothing · What it is: Moving on your hands and feet is how every strong body starts.
- Break: Red Light, Green Light Squats · Minutes: 8 · Ages: 4 to 6 · You need: a chair, a wall · What it is: A squat is just sitting down on a chair that isn't there.
- Break: Teddy Bear Carry · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 5 to 6 · You need: a ball · What it is: Bottom back, chest up, flat back: the way everybody should pick things up.
- Break: Three Minute Shake-Out · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 6 to 9 · You need: a wall · What it is: A few minutes counts. It always counts.
- Break: Carpet Three · Minutes: 8 · Ages: 6 to 9 · You need: a wall · What it is: You never need a gym. You need a bit of floor.
- Break: Twenty On, Ten Off · Minutes: 8 · Ages: 9 to 12 · You need: a wall · What it is: Short and hard builds a different thing from long and steady. You want both.
- Break: Morning Stretch · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 6 to 9 · You need: a wall · What it is: Bendiness is a thing you train, like strength. It just takes longer.
- Break: After Sitting All Day · Minutes: 8 · Ages: 9 to 12 · You need: a towel, a wall · What it is: Sitting still shortens things. Stretching gives them back.
- Break: Waddle and Kick · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 5 to 6 · You need: nothing · What it is: Moving low and moving on all fours are two things a body forgets how to do.
- Break: Before Bed Stretch · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 6 to 9 · You need: a wall · What it is: Slow stretching at the end of the day tells a busy body it is allowed to stop.
- Break: Long Legs · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 9 to 12 · You need: a towel, a wall · What it is: Bendiness is trained like strength is. It just takes longer and feels like doing nothing.
- Break: Desk Side Three · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 6 to 9 · You need: nothing · What it is: A few minutes of moving resets a brain that has been sitting still.

20 quiet games

- Game: Beat Your Own Time · Who: one child · Minutes: 5 · Ages: 5 to 14
- Game: Mirror Me · Who: pairs · Minutes: 5 · Ages: 4 to 14
- Game: Copy the Pose · Who: pairs · Minutes: 5 · Ages: 5 to 14

- Game: Keep It Up · Who: pairs · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 5 to 14
- Game: Rock, Paper, Scissors, Squats · Who: pairs · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 6 to 14
- Game: Pass and Move · Who: pairs · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 6 to 14
- Game: Freeze Dance · Who: the class · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Animal Tag · Who: the class · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Simon Says Moves · Who: the class · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 4 to 12
- Game: Shadow Me · Who: pairs · Minutes: 5 · Ages: 5 to 14
- Game: Traffic Lights · Who: the class · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Hold It Till It Comes Back · Who: the class · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 7 to 14
- Game: Roll an Animal · Who: the class · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Balloon Keep-Up · Who: one child · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 4 to 12
- Game: Steal the Sock · Who: pairs · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 6 to 14
- Game: Wheelbarrow Walk · Who: pairs · Minutes: 5 · Ages: 7 to 14
- Game: Two Balls at Once · Who: pairs · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 8 to 14
- Game: Everybody's It · Who: the class · Minutes: 6 · Ages: 6 to 12
- Game: Captain's Coming · Who: the class · Minutes: 7 · Ages: 5 to 12
- Game: Pass the Pose · Who: the class · Minutes: 5 · Ages: 5 to 14

Why they work

Moving gets more blood and oxygen to a brain that has been still for forty minutes, and it resets attention in a way that asking for attention does not. Plenty of teachers also find a class settles to reading more easily after one — which is why the Gym sits beside the library rather than instead of it.

The practical reason they work is smaller: a child who has been asked to sit still for a long time will move anyway. A brain break decides when.

Running one in a classroom

- Pick the quiet ones. Nothing on this page jumps, stamps or drops, so the class below will not hear it.
- An arm's length each, beside a desk, is enough room for every break listed here.
- Two to five minutes is plenty. Longer and you are running a PE lesson in a classroom.
- Every move has an easier version and a seated version, so a child who cannot stand still takes part.

For a hall rather than a classroom

The PE games are the whole-class ones, and the Gym's teachers' page has the class workouts.

Why nothing here mentions weight

The Gym never mentions weight, shape, size or calories, and never suggests eating less. About sixty of those words are refused in the code itself, in every line a child reads, including the spoken ones. What it says instead is strong, fast, springy, steady and bendy — and that food is fuel.

Nothing is sent anywhere

The Gym is free, with no ads and no sign-up. There is no camera, no pose detection and no leaderboard. What your child has done and their own best times stay on their own device and are never sent anywhere, so there is nothing to lose and no account to make.

Free at peabody.kids/brain-breaks-for-kids