



Movement Activity Cards

Introduction

Physical literacy is the development of physical competence, confidence, and motivation to be active for life. Generally, physical literacy is developed through competence in fundamental movement skills, which leads to the confidence to move, and the motivation to continue moving.

Many educators find that introducing short movement breaks throughout the day can help develop students' physical literacy, improve focus, and increase learning. These movement cards are intended to help provide easy and fun activities that can be used in your class. The separate cards can be cut out and laminated for display in the classroom.

These activities come from many of the various resources available in PLAYBuilder, project workshops, and downloadable resources on the School Physical Activity and Physical Literacy project website (www.schoolpapl.ca).

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Alphabet Balance

Ask students to space themselves out in the classroom. The educator or student leader calls out different letters of the alphabet and the students make the shape of the letter with their bodies. Can they make the letters standing, sitting, or lying on the ground?

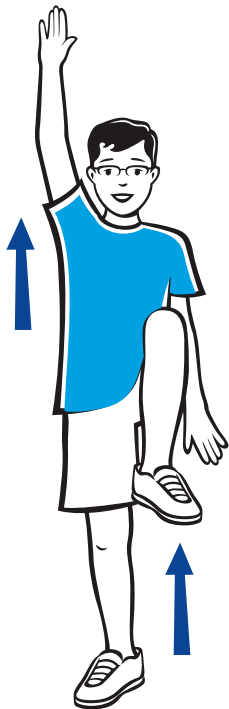
Challenge: Ask students to spell a word that they are studying in language arts, science, or social studies.



Apple Pickers

Ask students to stand in place and reach towards the sky with their right hand while lifting their left knee. Alternate with left hand and right knee up. Encourage them to stretch as high as possible and move fluidly and quickly through the sequence.

Challenge: Wiggle fingers and toes during the exercise.



Balance Clock

Students start by balancing on one foot. Next, they swing the raised foot in front and behind them. Once they have mastered that, ask students to swing their foot from side to side across their bodies while standing on one foot. Using their arms as the hands of a clock, can they make 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, and 9:00.

Challenge: Those that have mastered these balances can try them with their eyes closed.



Bird Balance

Have students balance in various bird poses.

For the Flamingo Balance, stand on one foot with the opposite foot extended in front of them.



For the Stork Balance, have them stand on one foot, with the opposite foot placed on their supporting calf.



For the Crane Balance, balance on one foot with their opposite knee lifted up in front and their arms expanded outwards to their sides.



Have the students hold these poses for 10 seconds (K–2), 15 seconds (3–4), and 20 seconds (5–7).

Challenge: What other bird poses can they think of?



Bodies of Sight Words

Have students distance themselves in the classroom. Place language arts sight words on the wall for reference. Yell out a sight word for the students to spell using their bodies. They can do it standing up, laying down, or a combination of both. Students can refer to the word on the wall if needed.

Challenge: Students work together to spell the sight word.



Cross-Laterals

Students stand in place, and with one hand, touch opposite elbows, then shoulders, knees, ankles, and hips. Create variations (e.g., elbows to knees or hand to foot behind body). Keep the pace slow, and encourage deep breathing.



Freeze It

Students move throughout the classroom using different locomotor movements (e.g., skip, hop, gallop). Remind them to be careful so as not to bump into each other, desks, or other classroom materials. The educator calls out a number that indicates how many body parts they are to balance on for five seconds. For instance, if the educator calls out “three,” students can balance on one foot and two hands, or a foot, elbow, and hand.

Challenge: Students balance on five body parts.



If You Like

Give students an “if you like” question, and an exercise to do if it’s true. For example, “If you like ice cream, do five squats,” or, “If you like ketchup on your French fries, hop on your right foot 10 times.” Try adding an activity for both responses: “If you like dogs, balance on your right foot; if you like cats, balance on your left foot.”

Challenge: Any balance exercise done with the eyes closed is more challenging.



Bean Bag Twister

Spread a Twister mat on the floor and give each student a beanbag. Students must throw their beanbag onto the colour that the spinner landed on. Play in teams, giving each team a point for the number of beanbags they land on the correct colour dot. Adjust the throwing distance to the student's throwing skills.

Challenge: Vary the throwing rules: both hands, overhead, underhand, with a twist, standing on one foot, with their non-dominant hand, or through their legs.



Name Toss

Make a large circle around the classroom or a few smaller ones depending on the size of the group. Use soft items to throw and catch, like a beanbag, beach ball, foam ball, rubber chicken, or stuffed animal.

Have one student toss the item across the circle and say the person's name to whom they are throwing it to, so they are ready.

Once the participants are aware of how to play the game, introduce more throwing items to make it more challenging and exciting.

The students cannot pass to the same person twice in a row.

Challenge: Have students stand on their right foot during the game. Change feet every 20 seconds.



Over the Falls

The student holds a beanbag in their right hand, and drops it over their right shoulder. They try to catch the beanbag behind their back with their left hand. Try this with both hands.

Challenge: The student places their left foot forward, and with their right hand, tosses the beanbag up over their head. They try to catch it behind their body with their left hand. Repeat this challenge with the other hand. Standing with their legs apart, the students drop the beanbag over their shoulder and catch it by reaching between their legs.



Sight Word Targets

Place the class sight words on the wall. Put students in pairs or small groups, and give each group a foam ball or beanbag. Say a sight word, and have students take turns throwing the object to hit the word. They can throw underhand or overhand. Adapt the activity for various skill levels by moving the students closer or further away from the target.

Challenge: Tell students to only throw with their non-dominant hand.



Under the Leg and In the Air

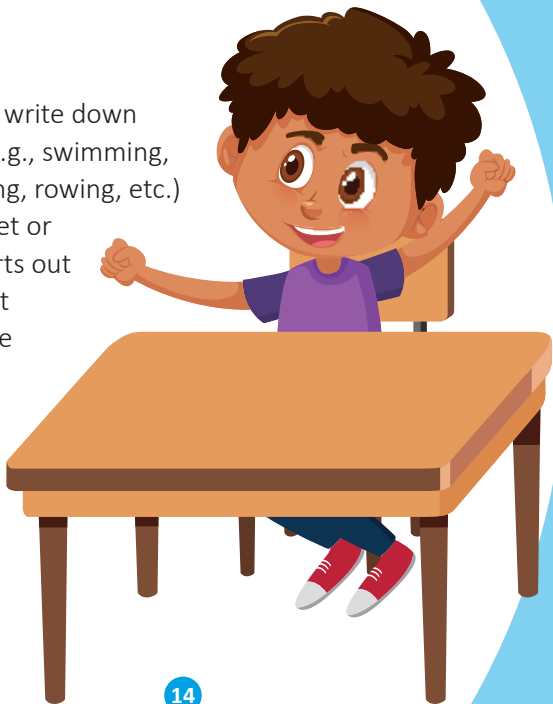
Students stand with the beanbag in their right hand. They lift their right leg and toss the beanbag under the thigh, and up in the air. They catch it with their left hand, and repeat this 10 times. Next, lift the right leg and toss the beanbag under their right leg with their right hand, catching it with their right hand. Try this 10 times on both sides.



Desk Olympics

On small pieces of paper, write down various Olympic sports (e.g., swimming, canoeing, cycling, sprinting, rowing, etc.) and place them in a bucket or hat. Draw one of the sports out and have students do that sport for 20 seconds while staying in their desk. Try doing a few desk Olympic sports during the movement break.

Challenge: Can they do the sport using five or more parts of their bodies?



Desk Sprint Relays

Line desks in rows. Starting at the back of the row, the first student must run in their desk so that they stay seated and their right foot hits the floor 30 times.

They then touch the back of the student in the desk in front of them, who does the same.

The race continues until the student sitting in the front desk has completed their sprint. The row that reaches the finish first is the winning team.

Challenge: Work on skip counting by having students count their running steps by 2s, 3s, 5s, or 10s. Increase the total that they must count to accordingly (e.g., count to 150 by 5s).



Desk Volleyball

Line desks up on either side of the class, facing each other. Ideally, the gap in between the desks should not be more than 1.5 metres. Using a beach ball, students play volleyball while staying seated in their chairs.

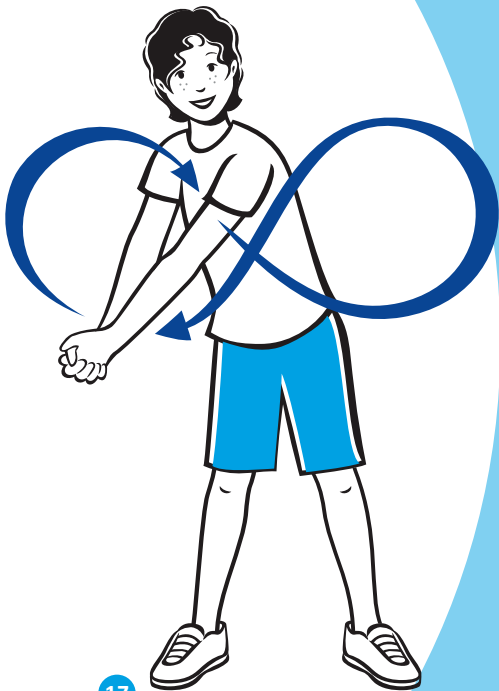
Adaptation: With younger students, consider using balloons or slightly deflating the beach ball. The more the ball is deflated, the slower it will move, and the easier it will be.



Infinity Move

Standing next to their desk, students clasp their hands in front of them. They move their hands in a slow, horizontal, figure eight form. Encourage them to take slow, deep breaths. Try the motion in both directions.

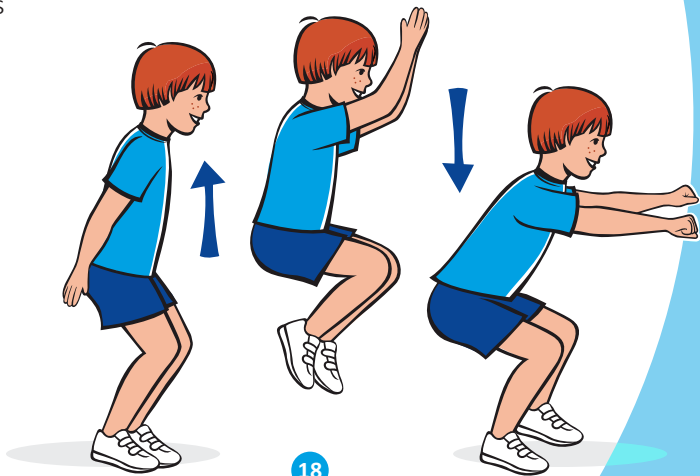
Challenge: Students balance on one foot while moving their arms in the Infinity motion.



Motorcycle Jumps

Students start by standing with their feet shoulder-width apart and knees bent. They then jump straight up and down, and land on the spot with their knees bent knees and arms forward, as if sitting on a motorcycle. Can they do 10 in a row?

Challenge: It is much harder if the student lands in a deep squat position.

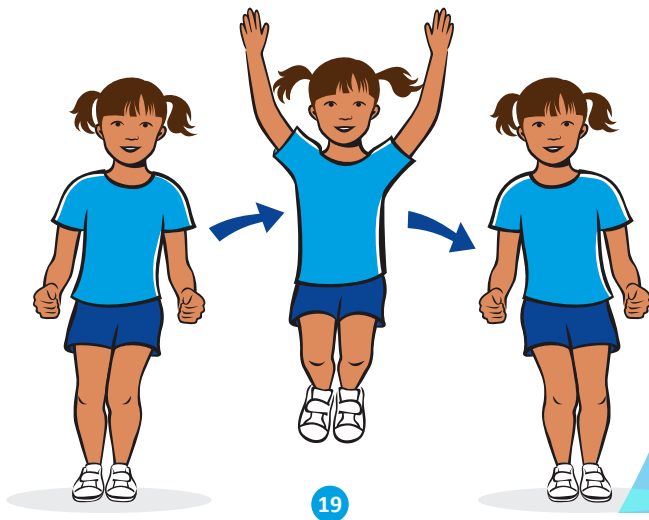


Skier Jumps

Have students stand with their feet together. They jump from side to side, swinging their arms up with each jump, and landing with their knees bent.

Challenge:

How many Skier Jumps can they do in 30 seconds?

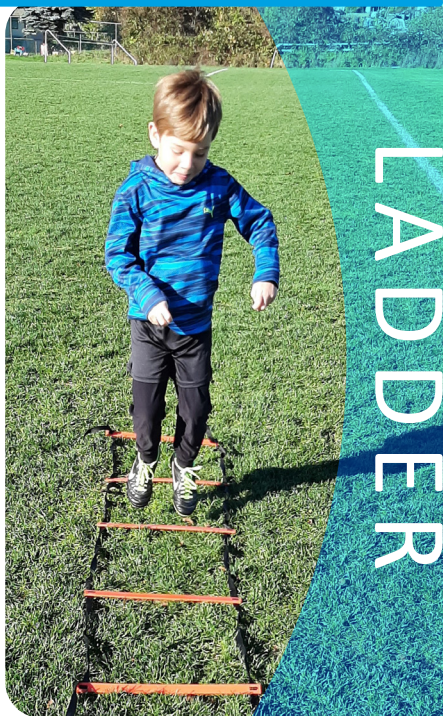


JUMP

Continuous Jumps

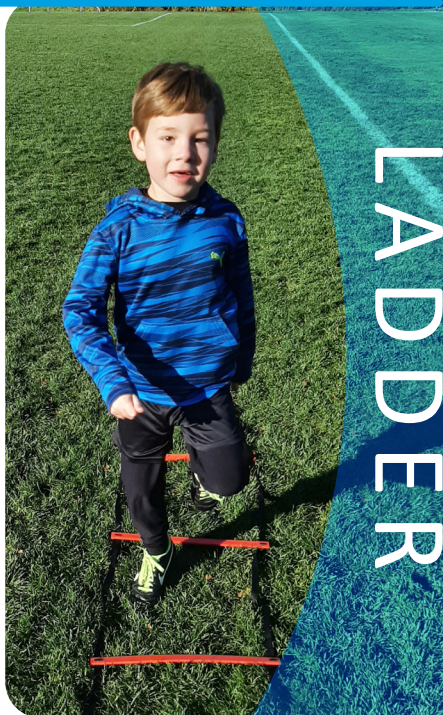
Use an agility ladder or make one using masking tape or sidewalk chalk. Start the students with both feet at the first square with their feet shoulder-width apart. Jump into the first square with both feet. Pause briefly before jumping into the second square. Continue for the length of the ladder. Encourage students to develop a consistent rhythm while jumping.

Challenge: Can students jump backwards through the ladder?



High Knees

Use an agility ladder or make one using masking tape or sidewalk chalk. Students start at the first square and march through the ladder with a high knee motion. They should drive their knees upward to belly button height, and ensure that they step in each square with both feet before moving to the next square. Encourage them to use their arms in a running form and to stay tall throughout the full motion. Students step with one foot in each square before moving to the next square.



In, In, Out, Out

Use an agility ladder or make one using masking tape or sidewalk chalk. Start students with their feet hip-width apart at the start of the ladder. They then step forward into the first square with the left foot, and then with the right foot. They then step outside to the left of the second square with their left foot, and to the right of the second square with their right foot. Next, they step into the third square with their left and then their right foot.

Repeat for the length of the ladder. Encourage students to repeat “In, In, Out, Out” in their head to guide their steps.

Challenge: Add some speed to the activity to increase the challenge. Can students do this backwards through the ladder?



Rapid Through

Use an agility ladder or make one using masking tape or sidewalk chalk. Students make a simple, straight “run” through the ladder. Starting with their left foot in the first square, they place their right foot in the second square and continue alternating one foot per square for the length of the ladder.

Challenge: Run through the ladder backwards, placing only one foot in each square.



Scissors

Use an agility ladder or make one using masking tape or sidewalk chalk.

Have student stand on the right side of the ladder, and turn to face the ladder.

Standing still, the student places their right foot inside the first square and left foot outside.

With a swift scissor motion, they quickly withdraw the right foot from the square and replace it with their left foot.

With the next scissor step, they withdraw the left foot while placing the right foot into the second square. Repeat the pattern for the length of the ladder.

Challenge: Come back on the other side of the ladder facing away from the ladder. Students should be scissoring backwards and stepping back into the ladder.



Twisties

Use an agility ladder or make one using masking tape or sidewalk chalk. Students start with their left foot inside the first square and their right foot outside. With a jump, they pivot and twist at the hips so that the right foot lands in the second square. Repeat the movement for the length of the ladder.

Challenge: Come back the other direction.



Icky Shuffle

Use an agility ladder or make one using masking tape or sidewalk chalk.

The student starts on the left side of the the first square of the ladder. They step the right foot into the first square, followed by the left foot.

They then step out of the square with their right and then left foot.

Moving forward, they step into the second square with their left foot.

This pattern is repeated for the length of the ladder.

Challenge: Can the students do the Icky Shuffle backwards?



Beach Ball Math

Scribble numbers all over a beach ball with a Sharpie. Assemble students in a large circle and ask them to toss the ball to each other. Upon catching the ball, they note the number where their thumbs hit the ball and add, subtract, or multiply the numbers before throwing the ball to another student.

Challenge: Students catch and toss the ball while standing on one foot.



Beanbag Toss for Place Value

Teach younger students place value with this target challenge. Label plastic bins with place values like 1s, 10s, and 100s. Have students toss beanbags into the bins from a distance, then count them to see what number they've created.

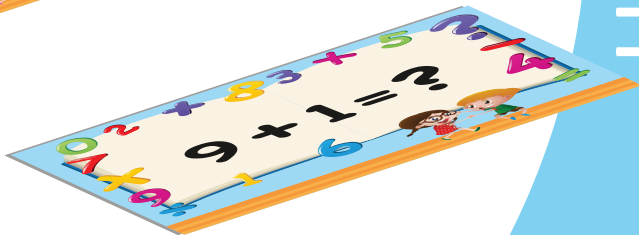
Challenge: Give students a number they must create by throwing beanbags into the labelled bins. For example, ask them to throw their beanbags to create 3,412.



Flash Card Racing

Tape a row of flashcards to the classroom floor. Time students to see how fast they can make it through the row, only proceeding to the next card when they get the answer correct.

Challenge: Add a competitive element to the challenge by creating two rows side-by-side, and having students race each other.



Geometric Yoga

Teach angles and work on balance and core strength. Ask students to demonstrate as many angles as possible using their body. Can they demonstrate 45, 90, or 180 degrees? How about acute, right, or obtuse angles?



MATH

Math True or False

Write an activity on the board for both “true” and “false”. For example, true = squats and false = high knees. Give students a math problem with a true or false solution. If students think the answer is correct, then they do squats. If they think it’s false, they do high knees. Change the activities every couple of questions.

Challenge: Tell students to close their eyes until they start doing the exercise, so that they aren’t copying other students’ responses.



Measuring Jumps and Hops

Ask students to practice their jumps (two feet) and hops (one foot). Use measuring tapes to measure and log their best jumps and hops. Have them try different types of jumps (e.g., frog jumps) or hopping on different legs. Graph the jumps and hops to show which are the longest.

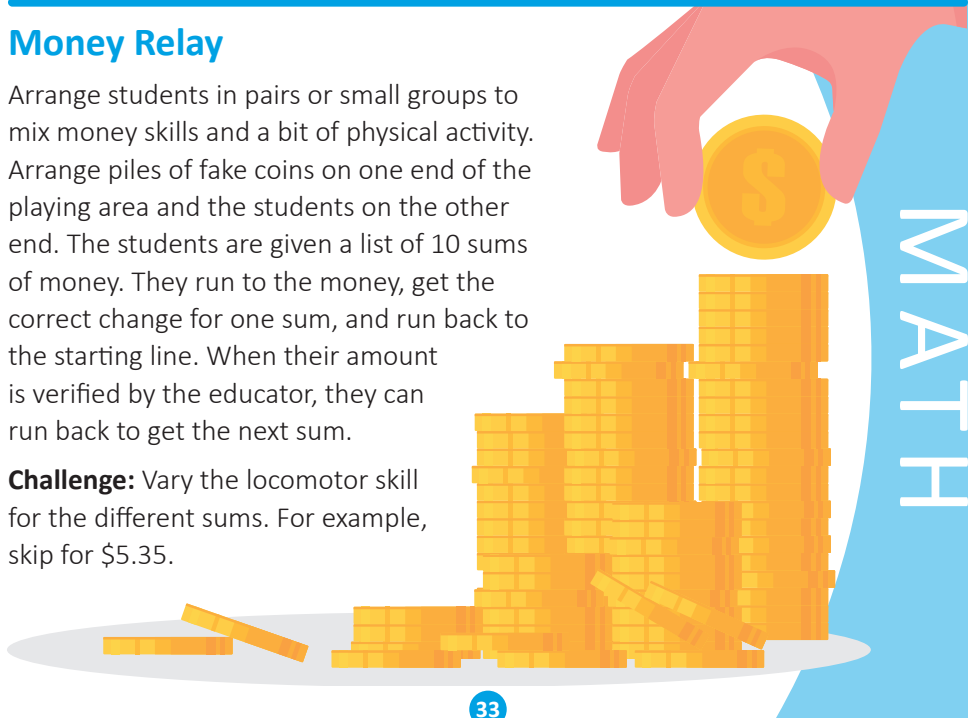
Challenge: Measure side jumps and backwards jumps.



Money Relay

Arrange students in pairs or small groups to mix money skills and a bit of physical activity. Arrange piles of fake coins on one end of the playing area and the students on the other end. The students are given a list of 10 sums of money. They run to the money, get the correct change for one sum, and run back to the starting line. When their amount is verified by the educator, they can run back to get the next sum.

Challenge: Vary the locomotor skill for the different sums. For example, skip for \$5.35.



Number Jump

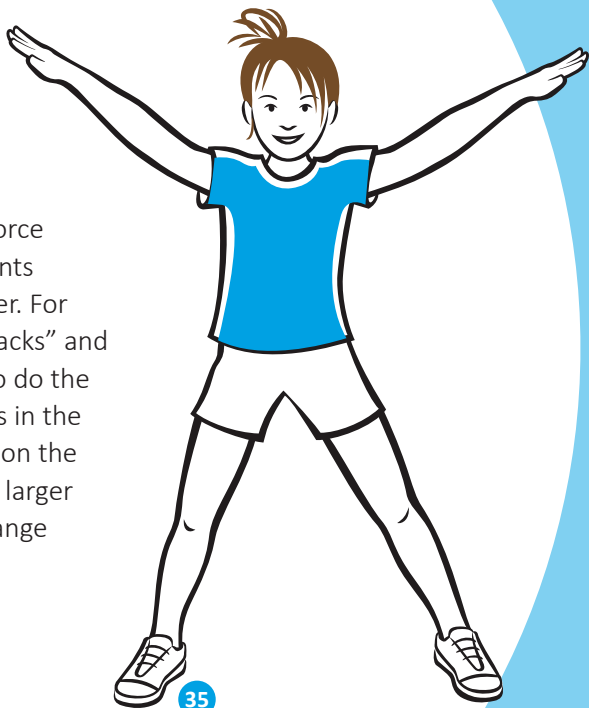
Design number lines with numbers from zero up to 20 using floor tape, numbered cones, sidewalk chalk, or laminated number cards. Have a number line for each two to three students. Yell out various math questions as the students hop, leap, or jump to complete the answer. For example, two plus three should have the students landing on five. This can be used to teach addition/subtraction, multiplication/division, or odd and even numbers.

Challenge: For Grade 7 students, add positive and negative numbers, to teach integers.



Place Value Movements

Try this fun way to reinforce place values. Give students an exercise and a number. For example, say “jumping jacks” and “698”. Then, tell them to do the number of jumping jacks in the 10s column. Depending on the age of the students, use larger or smaller numbers. Change the exercise frequently.

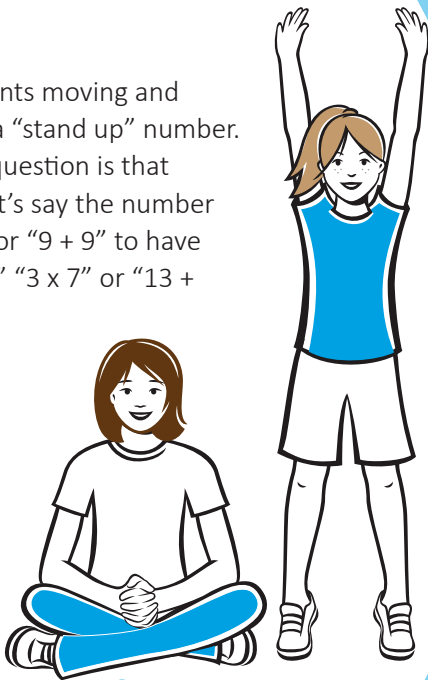


Stand Up/Sit Down

This is a fun game to get students moving and thinking about math. Call out a “stand up” number. Every time the answer to the question is that number, students stand up. Let’s say the number is 18. Call out “ $21 - 3$,” “ 3×6 ,” or “ $9 + 9$ ” to have students stand up, and “ $22 - 3$,” “ 3×7 ” or “ $13 + 6$ ” to have them sit down.

Alternatively, you can say that they are to sit if it’s an even number, and stand when it’s an odd number.

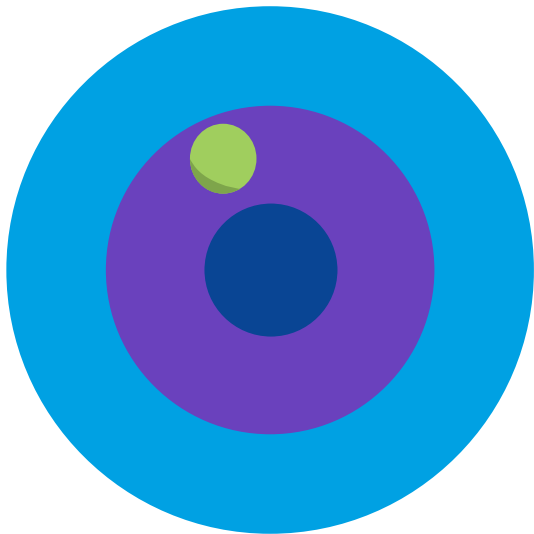
Challenge: Change the activity to increase the challenge. Try running on the spot, doing a balance pose, or doing a tuck jump.



Target Graphing

Create a target on the whiteboard with three coloured rings. Give students 10 objects to throw at the target. Record how many of the objects hit each coloured ring and in which order they hit each colour. Now ask them to draw a pie chart, a line graph, and a bar graph.

Challenge: Students throw with their non-dominant arm.



Twister Math

Practice math skills using a Twister mat. Tape numbers to the coloured dots. Give students various math equations to twist to, such as “left foot to 3×6 ,” or “right hand to $15 - 6$.”



Front Plank

Students go into a plank position with their elbows and forearms resting on the ground. Some students might find this position uncomfortable, and might find it easier to hold a push up position with their hands and knees on the ground or floor. Recommended hold times are 10 seconds (K-2), 15 seconds (3-4), and 20 seconds (5-7).



PLANK

Challenge: Tell students to lift one hand and point forward. Get them to try this on each side, to build strength on both sides of their core.

Plank Hockey Game

Have two students face each other in the plank position with a disk between them. The space in between their arms is the goal. While holding a plank, try and score on your opponent by sliding the disk through their arms.

Challenge: Create a plank hockey ladder tournament. This can be done as individuals, or students can be paired up to represent their team.



PLANK

Slide Plank

Instruct students to lie on their left side.

On the “plank up” command, raise the body onto the left forearm. They should bend their left arm at 90 degrees with the elbow under the shoulder.

Tell them to fully extend their right arm above their right shoulder. The “point to the sky” cue works well as a reminder.

Complete side planks on both sides, holding for 10 seconds (K–2), 15 seconds (3–4) and 20 seconds (5–7).

Adaptation: If the student is struggling to hold their balance, tell them to move their upper foot to the ground in front of their bottom foot. This will give them more stability as they get used to the position and develop a stronger core.



Side Plank Rollover

Tell students to hold the side plank position, resting on their left forearm.

At the command “rollover,” they bend their right arm to 90 degrees, make a fist with their right hand, and roll into a plank on their right side without their hip touching the ground.

Can your students hold the positions for 10 seconds (K–2), 15 seconds (3–4), or 20 seconds (5–7)?

Challenge: From the position of a side plank, students slowly lift their top leg. Use the cue: “heel to the sky.”



Superhero Planks

Have students hold a plank position. Once they have their balance, instruct them to point one of their hands forward while lifting the opposite foot. This exercise is made easier if the students kneel for stability.

Can they hold this position for five seconds (K–2), 15 seconds (3–4), or 20 seconds (5–7)?



Challenge: It's more difficult if students spread their arms and legs, and easier if their feet and elbows are close together.

Up, Up, Down, Down

Start students in the front plank position, resting on their forearms.

Instruct the class to go “up” onto the left hand, while the right arm stays in the forearm support position.

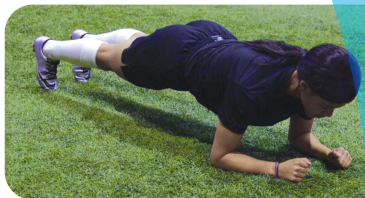
Again, tell them to go “up” on the right hand. They are now in a push-up position.

Now say “down,” telling the students to lower to their forearm on their left side.

Lastly, say “down” again, to cue them to lower to their right forearm.

Repeat this a few times.

Challenge: How many Up, Up, Down, Down cycles can students do in 20 seconds?



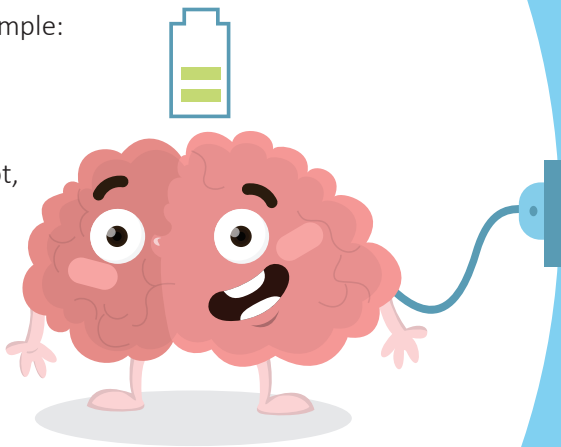
PLANK

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Brain Break

Time for a brain break. Students do five different movements in descending order. For example:

- **five** jumping jacks,
- **four** squats,
- **three** hops on each foot,
- **two** jumps with both feet, and
- **one** clap above their heads.

Challenge: Pick a student to decide which five activities you will do today. Can they do a countdown from 10?

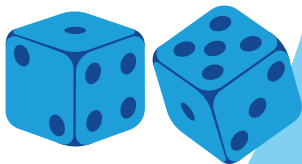


Roll of the Dice

Place students into groups of three and give each group a pair of dice. On the classroom whiteboard, write out the corresponding exercises for each number. For example:

- **one** star jump,
- **two** tuck jumps,
- **three** burpies,
- **four** twisties,
- **five** butt kicks,
- **six** push-ups (modified if needed),
- **seven** sit-ups,
- **eight** seconds of planks,
- **nine** jumping jacks,
- **10** high knees on the spot,
- **11** squats, and
- **12**-second stretches of their choice.

Each group member gets a turn to roll the dice, and the group does the corresponding exercises.



Skip Counting

Have students perform actions in a sequence as they count out loud.

For example:

- lift the left leg and whisper “**two**,”
- lift the right leg and whisper “**four**,”
- lift the left arm and whisper “**six**,”
- lift the right arm and whisper “**eight**,”
- lift the left leg and whisper “**10**,” etc.

Challenge: Have a student set the action sequence and the rest of the class follow along.



Mirror Mirror

Put students into pairs and designate one of the two to be the leader. The leader chooses one locomotor activity (e.g., hop, crab walk, skip) to do, and the follower must immitate it for 30 seconds. Change roles after 30 seconds. Speed up or slow down the motion. Change it to a non-locomotor activity (e.g., balance on one foot, push up, plank).

Challenge: Add requirements to increase the challenge. For instance, tell students that the locomotor activity has to only use one leg.



Grip Strength

Hand gripping exercises are a simple and effective way to improve grip strength, reduce playground injuries, and build strength for activities using objects such as bats, racquets, or sticks. Make some stress balls by filling balloons with sand or flour. Only fill so that the ball fills the student's hand, and tie them off securely. If possible, stretch another balloon over the ball to "double wrap" it. Squeeze the stress balls while reading poems, practicing spelling or multiplication tables, or rehearsing rhymes or chants.

Challenge: Squeeze while counting, and then change hands on multiples of 3, 5, or 10. Squeeze while reciting the alphabet, and change hands on the vowels.



Sky-Center-Sides-Center

Tell students to sit with their knees bent at 90 degrees and heels on the floor.

Have them lean back slightly and lift their feet off the floor.

Instruct them to pretend that they are holding a grapefruit in their hands close to their belly.

Challenge: Lift the grapefruit to the sky (over their head), lower the grapefruit back to their belly, and then touch the grapefruit to each side of their bodies. Continue the pattern of sky-center-sides-center five times (K-2), eight times (3-4), or 12 times (5-7).



Table Top

From a seated position, the students form a “table” with their body. Their palms are down and arms are locked straight. Their knees are bent at 90 degrees, and their belly is raised flat.

Adaptation: These are more advanced exercises that some students may find difficult. Consider a crab walk as a modification for those students who are struggling with this activity.

Challenge: Raise one foot off the ground and hold it for one second. Alternate heel lifts.



Table Top Leg Kicks

Once students master the Table Top exercise, tell them to lift and straighten one leg and hold it for one second. Alternate legs for a set amount of time.

Adaptation: These are more advanced exercises that some students may find difficult. Consider a crab walk as a modification for those students who are struggling with this activity.

Challenge: Students position themselves so that their feet can touch those of a partner. As they lift their leg, their sole must touch the sole of their partners feet.



Ball and Cup Catch

Give each student a small ball (e.g., table tennis ball, plastic ball, or tennis ball) and a cup. Students throw the ball up and catch it with the cup. This activity works hand and eye coordination.

Challenge: Ask students to practice this while standing on one foot. Try throwing the ball with the non-dominant hand. Create a large circle of students. Give the ball to one person to toss across the circle to a friend. They are to call out the name of the student, who is to catch the ball in their cup.



Seated Juggle Bucket

Separate students into pairs, with one person sitting and the other standing behind them. Give the standing student a small object like a ball or an eraser.

The standing student drops the object into the sitting student's left hand.

They toss the object to their right hand and then throw it up above their head.

The standing student catches the object in their right hand, tosses it to their left hand, and then drops it in the seated person's left hand.

After repeating this for five cycles, change directions. Then, change places.

Adaptations: Use bigger and slower moving objects to make it easier.





Sport for Life



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