

20 MOVEMENT BREAKS

"AT YOUR DESK"

EXERCISES



**20 STRAIGHT-FORWARD EXERCISES
THAT ARE DESIGNED FOR QUICK
TRANSITIONS BACK TO SEATED WORK!**

INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE:

- One-page break poster
- Individual break cards for games/activities
- Larger-sized breaks cards (2 versions)
- Full page posters for all exercises
- Tips for use including the unmotivated and "hyper-motivated" student, safety & classroom management
- Suggested activities to introduce & practice movement breaks with students





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20 MOVEMENT BREAKS

WHAT ARE MOVEMENT BREAKS?

Movement breaks are short bursts of simple exercises done to provide energy release and prepare the brain for learning. Movement breaks allow the brain a short break from learning and the opportunity to process and consolidate information. It also provides the needed exercise and fitness necessary for improved academic performance and healthy living.

WHY IS MOVEMENT IMPORTANT?

Movement and exercise improve brain function by increasing oxygen to the brain through better circulation. This positively impacts cognitive function, attention, and memory. Exercise also helps with improving alertness and motivation which is crucial in a learning environment. Using practical and easy-to-implement movement breaks is key to greater focus and sustained attention resulting in improved learning!

IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

Classroom Management Strategies: It is important when introducing a new routine with your students to clearly define the expectations. Questions teachers might ask themselves include: What time of day will we do these movement breaks? How many movements will we do? Who will lead the class? What do the students do when they are done? What happens when students don't follow directions or get silly? Other considerations include preparing the room and asking, "Is there enough room for my students to safely and efficiently do the movements?" Other strategies include starting small, using a step-by-step approach, using basic visual and auditory cues, providing time limits, repeating the movements as needed, being firm, and moving continuously.

Classroom Transition Time: As students practice the movement breaks the overall transition time will decrease. The "silliness" that may occur in the beginning will subside and the new movements will become a natural classroom routine. Effective strategies to reduce transition time include practicing the movements ahead of time and establishing a solid routine that is well understood by the students.

Tips for Unmotivated Students: Start by building on student strengths and set expectations high. Develop a safe and secure classroom environment where all students are supported. Avoid power struggles, use rewards carefully, and encourage cooperation.

Tips for Hyper-motivated Students: Introduce the movements observantly and repeat directions frequently. Respond immediately to class rules being broken by providing relevant feedback and stating consequences regularly. Be consistent and fair. Avoid giving extra attention to "silly" behavior and keep the class moving.

Safety Tips: Student safety is the highest priority when moving within the room, even if the activity is nearby a student's desk. Questions teachers might ask themselves include: What rules must I enforce to maintain a safe environment for my students? How can I allow my students to move around my classroom and keep classroom items from being broken or damaged? What items in the classroom are breakable? What items in the classroom are sharp or tripping hazards?

20 MOVEMENT BREAKS

HOW TO USE THESE BREAKS

20 Movement Breaks are designed to be "at your desk" exercises so students can make quick transitions back to their seated work. When introducing these exercises, encourage discussion on when we might need a movement break. The breaks are straightforward. Each exercise has 10 repetitions listed. Feel free to adjust that number as needed for your class. Provide copies of the 20 Movement Breaks poster for each student to reference. Print, cut, and laminate movement cards for repeated use in games and activities.

WAYS TO INTRODUCE AND PRACTICE THESE BREAKS

- 1) **Introduce a "movement tool of the day."** Set aside a specific time each day to explain, model, and then practice each exercise. Start with the first movement on the list, have a designated student choose the tool, or mix it up!
- 2) **Designate a "Student Mover" of the day.** Have this student choose the movement tool(s) to be used that day. This designated student can lead the class in the exercises.
- 3) **Play "Movement Charades."** Place movement breaks cards into a container. Have students choose a card from the container (without letting their peers see it) and pantomime a tool. See if other students can guess the tool. Practice the exercise as a group.
- 4) **Play the "Describe the Tool" game.** Place movement breaks cards into a container. Have students choose a card from the container (without letting their peers see it) and describe the tool verbally without using words in the tool's name, rhyming words, or gestures. Practice the exercise as a group.
- 5) **Substitution ideas for counting:** Instead of counting each movement to 10 incorporate orally spelling words, recite the ABCs for younger students, count backward, count higher, or start counting from another number and count up or down, etc.
- 6) **I Do, You Do:** Have students partner up and alternate each movement exercise.
- 7) **Add music.** Provide upbeat music to the exercises. When the music stops, that is the signal that all exercises are done, and students need to return to their seats.
- 8) **Fitness Freeze game.** Have students start the exercise and then "freeze" in mid-motion to practice balancing skills. Identify one student to lead the group by announcing "freeze" and then "go" to the class.
- 9) **Create Movement Stations.** Within your classroom, post movement cards in different locations. At designated times, direct 1 or 2 students to go to a station and complete the exercises. Change out movements periodically.
- 10) **Post the 20 breaks in your classroom's calming corner or break area.** Students can reference the list and complete the exercises on their own.

20 MOVEMENT BREAKS



10 JUMPING JACKS



10 FORWARD ARM CIRCLES



10 CROSS CRAWLS



10 LUNGES



10 CHAIR DIPS



10 SHOULDER TWISTS



10 CALF RAISES



10 TOE TOUCHES



10 MARCHES IN PLACE



10 BACKWARD ARM CIRCLES



10 HIGH KNEES



10 PUSHUPS



10 KNEE GRABS



10 SIDE LEG LIFTS



10 SECOND PLANK



10 MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS



10 SQUATS



10 SIT UPS



10 SWING KICKS



10 CHAIR TAPS

10
JUMPING
JACKS



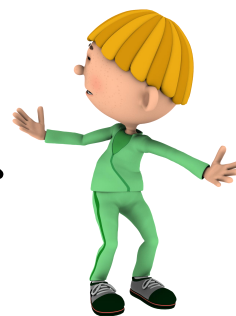
10
FORWARD
ARM
CIRCLES



10
CHAIR
DIPS



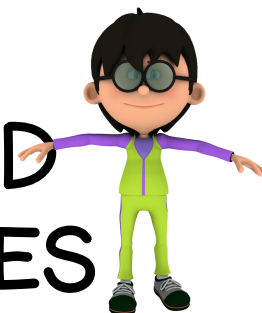
10
SHOULDER
TWISTS



10
MARCHES
IN PLACE



10
BACKWARD
ARM CIRCLES



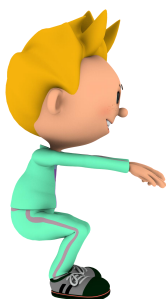
10
KNEE
GRABS



10
SIDE LEG
LIFTS



10
SQUATS



10
SIT
UPS



10
CROSS
CRAWLS



10
LUNGES



10
CALF
RAISES



10
TOE
TOUCHES



10
HIGH
KNEES



10 PUSHUPS



10 SECOND
PLANK



10 MOUNTAIN
CLIMBERS



10
SWING
KICKS



10
CHAIR
TAPS



10 JUMPING JACKS



10 FORWARD ARM CIRCLES



10 CHAIR DIPS



10 SHOULDER TWISTS



10 MARCHES
IN PLACE



10
BACKWARD
ARM CIRCLES



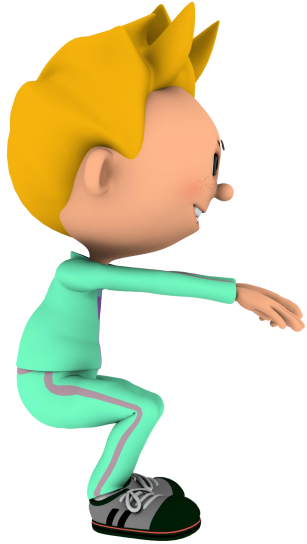
10 KNEE
GRABS



10 SIDE
LEG LIFTS



10 SQUATS



10 SIT UPS



10 CROSS
CRAWLS



10 LUNGES



10 CALF RAISES



10 TOE TOUCHES



10 HIGH KNEES



10 PUSHUPS



10 SECOND PLANK



10 MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS



10 SWING KICKS



10 CHAIR TAPS



10
JUMPING
JACKS



10
FORWARD
ARM CIRCLES



10
CHAIR DIPS



10
SHOULDER
TWISTS



10
MARCHES
IN PLACE



10
BACKWARD
ARM CIRCLES



10

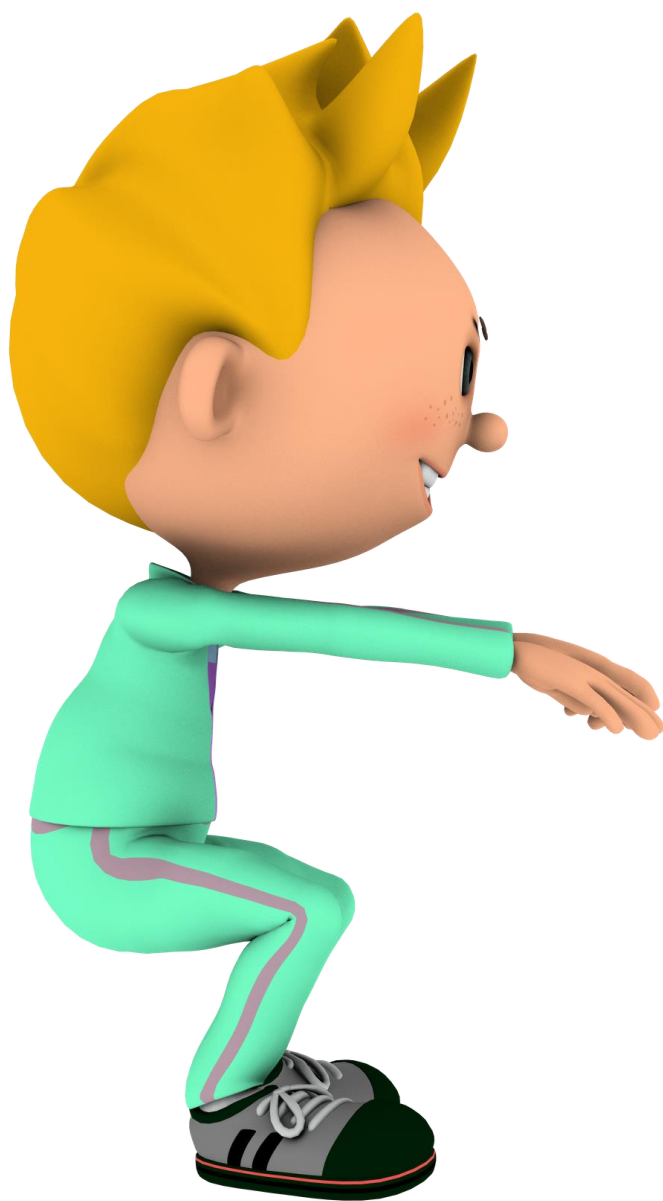
KNEE GRABS (each knee)



10
SIDE LEG LIFTS
(each leg)



10
SQUATS



10
SIT UPS



10

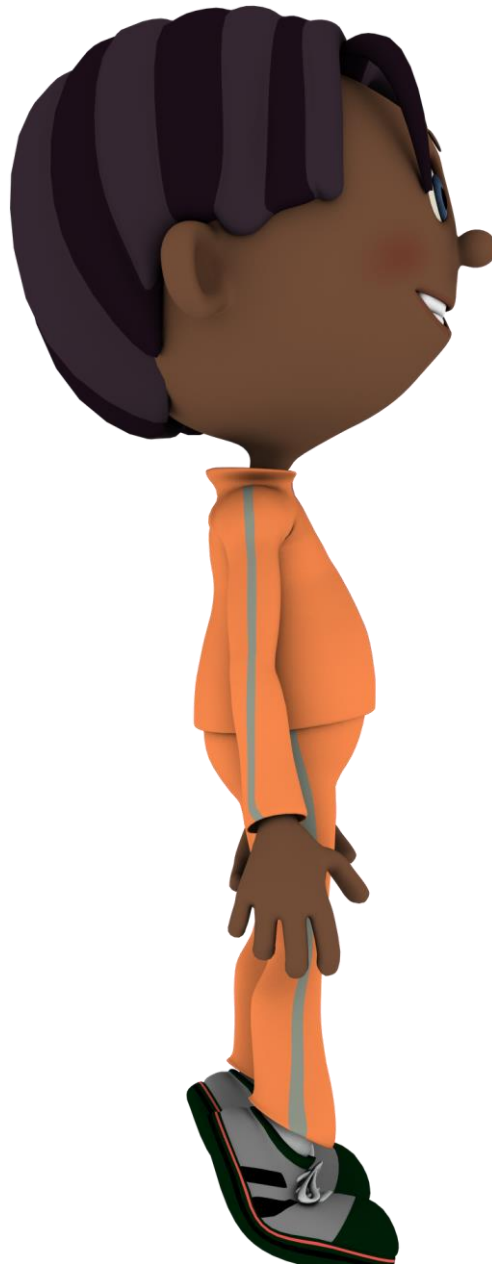
CROSS CRAWLS (each side)



10 LUNGES



10
CALF RAISES



10

TOE TOUCHES



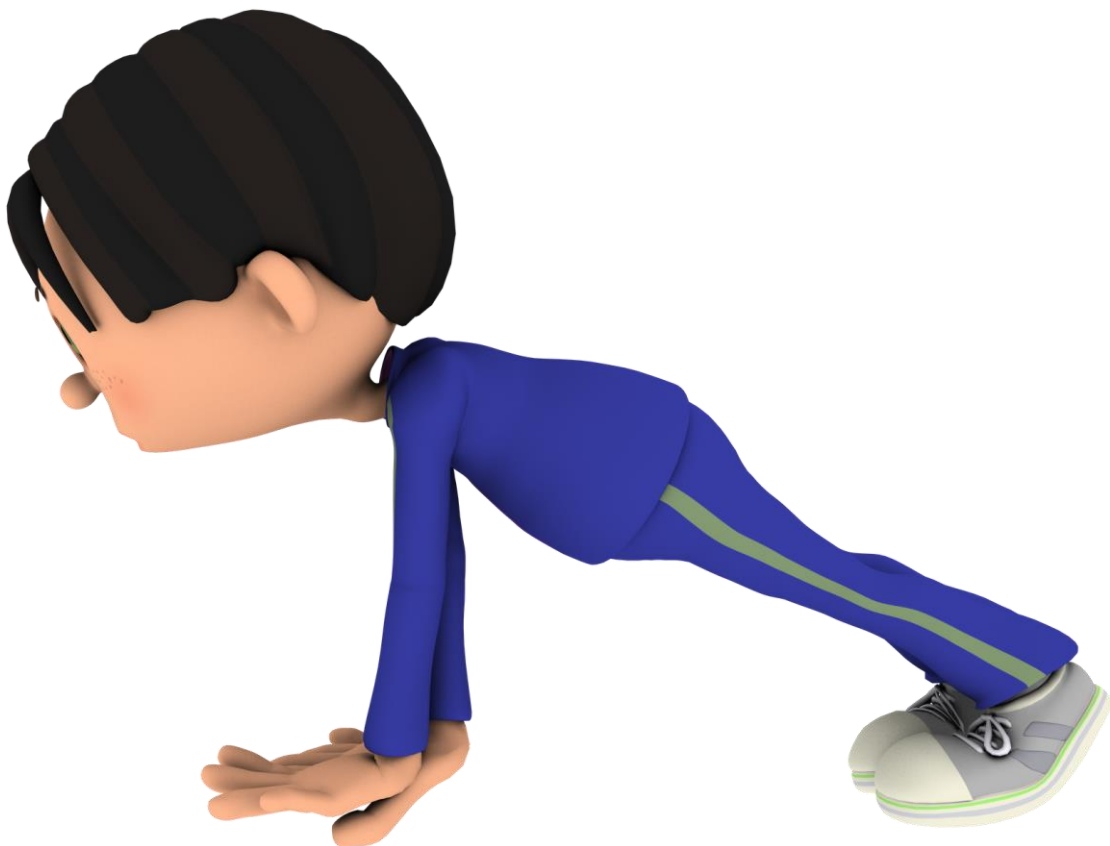
10
HIGH KNEES



10
PUSHUPS



10
SECOND
PLANK



10
MOUNTAIN
CLIMBERS



10
SWING KICKS
(each leg)



10
CHAIR TAPS
(each foot)



ABOUT POSITIVELY MOXIE

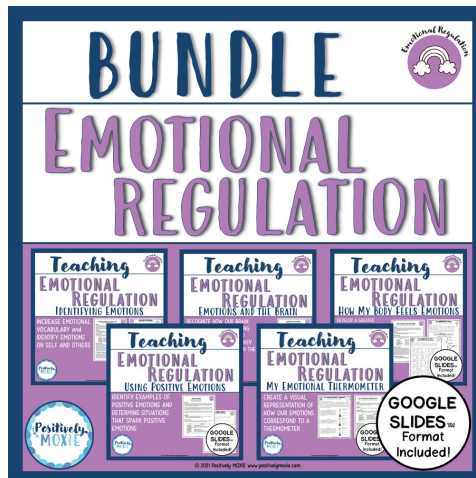
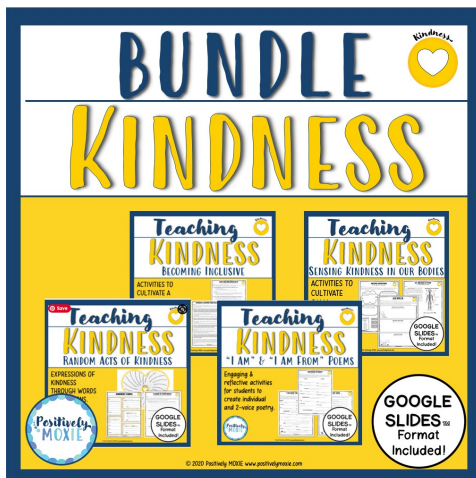
Molly (a junior high school counselor and former elementary school teacher) and Jill (a school-based occupational therapist) have teamed up to empower teachers, counselors, therapists, and parents who want to teach young people the skills needed to better coach their brains for greater flourishing.

We are influenced by the science of positive psychology, counseling techniques, self-regulation, cognitive behavioral therapy, sensory processing, executive functioning, and brain science! We understand our students and youth need as many “tools” in their toolbox as we can give them.

Molly and Jill are passionate about creating relevant, high quality, and actionable resources to address well-being and resilience skills for students!



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