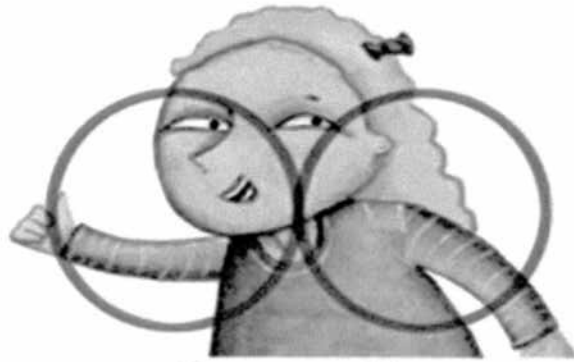


Brain Gym®

Basics



Lazy 8s

Simple Activities to use in the Classroom
for Whole-Brain Learning

February 8, 2012

For more information go to: www.braingym.org

Sindy Oldham

The 26 Activities

The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.

—Anatole France

This chapter tells in detail how to do each of 26 Brain Gym activities, which are grouped into four general categories. The Midline Movements come first, as learners dealing with information processing can receive the most immediate benefit from this group.

Of the four Brain Gym movement categories, the Midline Movements and Lengthening Activities, in particular, make use of all of the body's major muscle systems, while the Energy Exercises and Deepening Attitudes give emphasis to directionality, postural alignment, the vestibular system, and self-calming/stress release. The activities are intended to develop sensory skills, such as listening with both ears, moving the eyes across the visual midline, and focusing both eyes together in the visual midfield. As a whole, the following activity groups are also intended to help learners access common body shapes and universal movement patterns, such as walking upright in gravity, finding a comfortable standing or sitting posture, and developing handedness.

The Four Brain Gym Movement Categories

The Midline Movements help learners master sensorimotor coordination to organize symmetrical, two-sided actions. They pertain to skills of hand-eye coordination, for activation of the visual/auditory/tactile/kinesthetic modalities that must be centralized for coordinated function. Side-side integration allows for crossing of the body's vertical midline for whole-body movement and working with two hands, two eyes, and both ears in the midfield, as when processing a linear, symbolic, written code.

The Energy Exercises include skills of equilibrium, supporting grounding, directionality, and alignment in gravity. Top-bottom coordination allows learners to discover balance and to experience the body as a directional reference for planning, organizing, and lining things up.

The Deepening Attitudes activities restore a sense of calm, self-control, and relatedness. Coordination of the upper and lower body areas allows learners to stabilize their emotions, balancing fight-or-flight reactions with well-being.

The Lengthening Activities moderate the contraction and relaxation of muscles for locomotor skills. They pertain to the development of focus and relaxed attention and to skills of choice making and self-expression. Back-front integration allows learners to participate or hold back as appropriate, balancing the perception of details within a big-picture context.

The Brain Gym 26

The Midline Movements



24
The Elephant



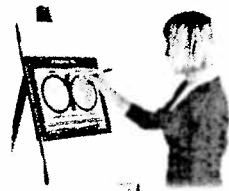
40
Think of an X



33
Neck Rolls



22
The Double Doodle



14
Alphabet 8s



17
Belly Breathing



20
The Cross Crawl



21
Cross Crawl Sit-ups



32
Lazy 8s



36
The Rocker



25
The Energizer

The Energy Exercises



39
Sipping Water



26
The Energy Yawn



38
The Thinking Cap



37
Space Buttons



23
Earth Buttons



18
Brain Buttons



16
Balance Buttons

Deepening Attitudes



The Positive Points



Part I

30



Part II

31

The Lengthening Activities



34
The Owl



15
Arm Activation



27
The Footflex



28
The Gravity Glider



19
The Calf Pump



29
The Grounder

Finding Your PACE

To find your PACE, explore doing these four activities. As you become familiar with them, you can use just the ones you most need to find your PACE. Many people tell us that, especially during times of stress, they value having this way to restore a natural pace. Start with Sipping Water, then do Brain Buttons and continue on around the circle, letting each of the activities build upon the one before:



The Cross Crawl

ACTIVE



Part I



Part II

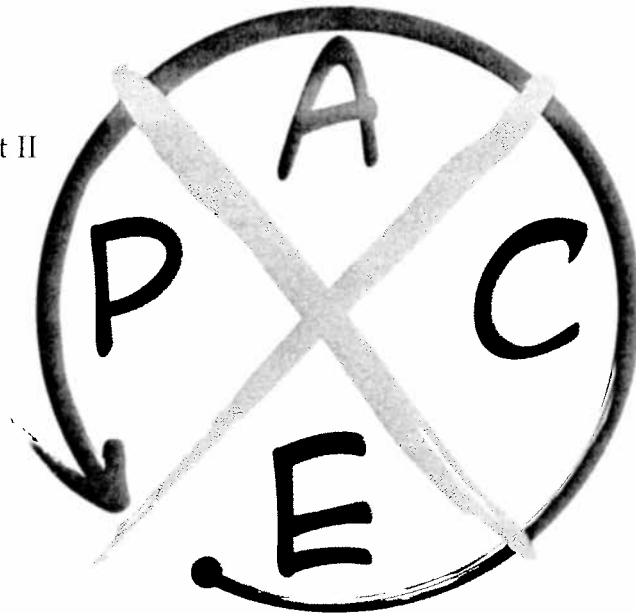
Hook-ups

POSITIVE



Brain Buttons

CLEAR



ENERGETIC



Sipping Water

Brain Gym at Work and Play

The physical skills listed within this section are separated for your ease in identifying specific areas to address. In life's actual learning experience, such skills aren't isolated. We recommend addressing each skill individually until students are able to apply it with ease and confidence on their own. Start with the suggested activities, then let learners choose from all 26!

Aligned Movement: Large-Motor Play or Comfortable Holding of an Object

Relaxed use of the body for running, jumping, skipping, climbing, or holding a book. Addresses coordinated movements of hips and shoulders in dynamic contralateral balance for stability, orientation, and postural ease.



The Cross Crawl



Earth Buttons



The Thinking Cap



Arm Activation

Aligned Movement: Working with Objects in the Midfield

Comfortable use of the combined hands and eyes, and posture ease while sorting, stacking, cutting, and coloring. Addresses coordinated movements of the head, shoulders, and arms in dynamic balance with the lower body to support postural ease and stability when using the hands and eyes to do puzzles, creative work, and other concrete operations.



Brain Buttons



The Double Doodle



Lazy 8s



Cross Crawl Sit-ups

Self-Awareness Skills

Clear Listening and Speaking through Crossing the Auditory Midline: Using External and Internal Feedback and Feedforward for Active Listening

Active listening calls for both the reception and processing of meaning, and is a basic prerequisite to effective communication. Externally, motor responses are employed for both hearing (head turning) and speech (vocal mechanisms). Internally, people need to access and interpret thoughts and associations to be able to respond from their experience. A feedback/feedforward loop allows for comprehension and expression.



The Elephant



The Thinking Cap



Belly Breathing



The Energy Yawn

A Positive Self-Concept: Evoking Self-Esteem As Both the Goal and the Means of Self-Directed Learning

Personal space is the immediate, ambient "domain" around the body. Having confidence within the boundaries of this space helps one to feel safe, to respect other people's space, and to know when risk-taking is appropriate. From this space, one can radiate thoughts, feelings, and self-expression.



The Positive Points



Hook-ups



Balance Buttons

Whole-Body Coordination for Sports and Dance: Activating Essential Brain/Body Responses While in Motion

Within the full range of physical movement (the kinesphere, which has left/right, top/bottom, and back/front dimensions), one defines one's boundaries and differentiates between relaxed and active areas of the body. One can then access one's visual and kinesthetic figure-ground abilities, such as ease of tracking a ball's position or hand-eye coordination for throwing and catching, on the playing field. It's by organizing their movement that people achieve greater initiatory ability and self-direction. The Footflex and the Calf Pump support heel-first walking and help the feet to relax and point forward.

X



Think of an X



The Cross Crawl



Balance Buttons



Arm Activation



Space Buttons



The Rocker



The Energizer



The Calf Pump



The Footflex

Primary Reading Skills

Crossing the Visual Midline: Comfortably Moving the Eyes Together Horizontally, Across the Midline of the Page

The development of visual skills for reading begins with the ability to move both eyes in tandem in the visual midfield, pointing back and forth across the vertical midline of the page. For reading, one eye must lead and point to focus (for content and semantic clues: letters, words, and meaning) and the other eye must follow and blend (for context and syntactic clues: sound, phrases, punctuation). Though access to both skills is theoretically available through each eye, in practice one eye must lead as the other eye blends. Stress in learning the tasks of focusing and blending for reading may cause visual disorientation.



The Cross Crawl



Brain Buttons



Earth Buttons



Lazy 8s

Oral Reading: Reading with Emotion, Expression, and Interpretation

New readers discover that, through reading aloud, they can communicate ideas and bring a story to life. In order to read not just mechanically but with interpretation, they must first be able to automatically decode linguistic symbols. The alphabetic code includes auditory, visual, and motor components that allow the reader to hear, see, and reconstruct the letters into spoken language.



The Cross Crawl



Belly Breathing



Neck Rolls



The Energy Yawn



The Rocker

Reading Comprehension: Anticipating and Internalizing Language for Focused Reading

Reading involves an active recreation of the author's message. Because, unlike pictographs, the symbols that make up the alphabetic code have no fixed linguistic meaning, the success of communication by means of the written word depends upon the writer encoding something meaningful and the reader decoding it to make it his or her own.



The Calf Pump



The Footflex



The Grounder

Primary Thinking Skills

Organization: Moving the Eyes in Any Direction Without Confusion

The manipulation of objects in space prepares learners for linear spelling and for the use of numerical symbols on the page. Easy access to multidirectional processes and multiple sensory modalities (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic) prepares learners to spell and do math. Until "left, right, up, down, and center" are recognized as unique visual spaces, there will be difficulty placing words or symbols in an ordered sequence and comprehending them when they are presented in columns. And the more familiarity one gains with numerical quantities and properties, the more quickly one is able to cross-reference modalities from the symbolic to the practical and tangible.



Earth Buttons



Space Buttons



Balance Buttons

Spelling: Accessing Visual Memory While at the Same Time Building Auditory Constructs

Efficient spelling requires storage of information through the development of both short-term auditory memory (for the linear sequencing of sounds) and long-term visual memory (for word recognition and associations).



The Thinking Cap



The Owl



The Elephant

Arithmetic and Mathematics: Working in a Multidirectional and Often Multidimensional Field

Skills of numeracy can be readily accessed when concepts about the space, mass, quantity, and relationship of concrete objects have already been internalized.



The Elephant



The Owl



The Calf Pump



Neck Rolls



The Gravity Glider

Primary Writing Skills

Eye-Hand Coordination: Drawing in the Left, Right, Upper, and Lower Visual Fields for Both Printing and Cursive Writing

Symbols (letters, numbers, and pictures) convey meaning, and the desire to communicate through symbols is the first step in acquiring drawing and writing skills. Learning the reciprocal motions of handwriting needs to be preliminary to keyboarding, for it fosters binocularity and creative expression. Ideally, gross-motor movement is established as a basis for the handedness and fine-motor control needed for drawing, writing, and keyboarding.



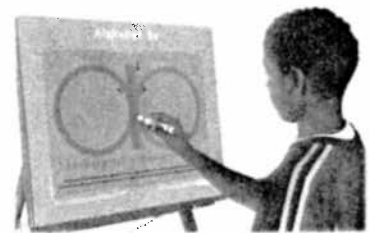
Arm Activation



The Double Doodle



Lazy 8s



Alphabet 8s

Creative Writing: As an Act of Linguistic Expression, Accessing and Translating Experiences via Long-Term Memory

Optimally, skills of reading and writing develop together, each reinforcing the other. Writing helps to establish active skills of attention (focus), perception (meaning), and discrimination (distinguishing one sound/symbol correspondence from another) and connects the code to associations and feelings. Ideally, writing skills keep pace with reading skills while being maintained at a level no more than two years below the reading level.



The Energy Yawn



The Footflex



The Calf Pump

Home-Study Skills

Memory and Abstract Thinking: Integrating Silent Speech and Visualization Skills in the Process Known As Thought

Once the reading vocabulary exceeds the speaking vocabulary (at about the sixth-grade level), silent speech is needed to interpret syntax and abstract concepts. Linguistic and visual clues must be integrated to enable the short-term storage of information for analysis and synthesis and its retrieval from long-term memory for comprehension and expression.



The Cross Crawl



Balance Buttons



The Positive Points



Neck Rolls



Brain Buttons



Lazy 8s

Creative Thinking: Relating New Input to One's Own Thought and Experience

Focus, attention, and concentration require the integration of prior life experiences (actual, imaginary, or vicarious) and new information, so that the new is processed and stored as personal knowledge.



The Energizer



The Gravity Glider/Any Lengthening Activity



The Rocker



The Cross Crawl

Speed-Reading: Accessing the Skimming and Scanning Abilities

In speed-reading, one bypasses as much of the linear process as possible while still actively taking in information. Skimming is exploring the printed page for meaningful material while skipping the redundant. Scanning is reviewing the data for anticipated information, such as a name or date. Skilled speed-readers vary their speed according to the given writing style and subject matter.



The Owl



Lazy 8s



The Cross Crawl



The Calf Pump /Any Lengthening Activity



Space Buttons



Brain Buttons

Taking Tests: Relaxing the Butterflies and Retrieving Information

Information that has been learned or experienced is stored in the long-term memory. To retrieve and use this information, especially in a situation that tests one's skills and abilities, requires one to be focused, present, and as free as possible from confusion, anxiety, or distractions.



Lazy 8s



The Positive Points



Hook-ups



The Cross Crawl



Sipping Water



Earth Buttons

Personal Ecology Skills

Productivity at the Computer: Stabilizing homeostasis

Working at a computer for too much time without relief may add to visual, auditory, or other physical stress. For one thing, a computer screen has only one visual plane, which compromises depth perception and binocular and peripheral vision. For every ten minutes at a computer, we suggest that, to maintain well-being, you do one of the following activities while looking into the distance. And, for every hour spent sitting at a computer, you can take a more active movement break by doing the Cross Crawl or one of the Lengthening Activities.



Sipping Water -



The Thinking Cap

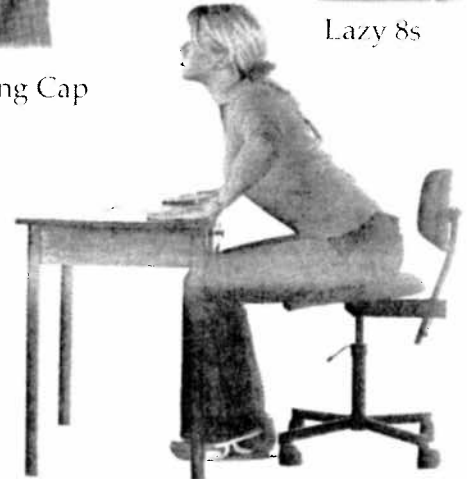


Lazy 8s



The Owl

Hook-ups



The Energizer

Riding in a Car, Bus, or Plane: Crossing the Moving Midline

For passengers in a moving vehicle, the vestibular system of the inner ear helps maintain balance by adjusting for left-to-right, back-to-front, or side-to-side motion. Such rapid motion can also adversely affect depth perception and binocular vision. These activities help to reestablish equilibrium and visual skills while in transit.



The Elephant



Balance Buttons



Lazy 8s



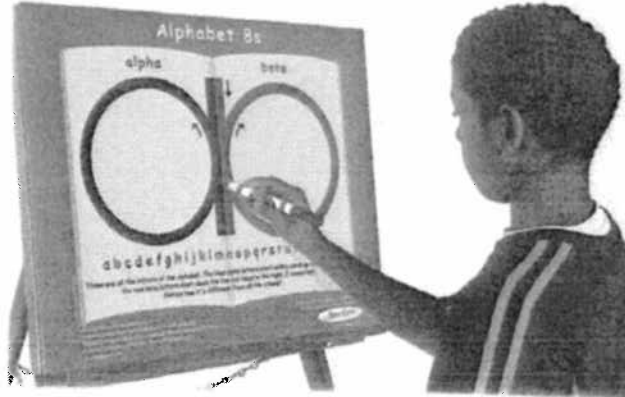
The Positive Points



Hook-ups

Alphabet 8s

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do Alphabet 8s

Trace or draw three Lazy 8s, always starting in the middle and going up to the left.

Without stopping, draw a lowercase "a" on the left-hand side of the black and white template, starting at the 2 o'clock position.

Again without stopping, draw 3 more Lazy 8s. Now draw a lowercase "b" on the right side of the template.

Continue through the alphabet. If you aren't sure which side to draw the letter on, look at the key on the bottom of the blue and red template.

What Alphabet 8s do

Alphabet 8s help you form letters and integrate the movement needed to write. Helps you feel the similarities of letters.

Improves the skills for writing automatically. Helps not only with penmanship but also with writing thoughts and the creativity and organization involved with written expression.

When to do Alphabet 8s yourself

- Anytime you need to write anything
- When you want ideas and thoughts to flow for writing automatic
- When you want to improve eye-hand coordination for sewing, painting, tying flies for fishing
- When you want to see better
- When you can't read your own handwriting

When to do Alphabet 8s with kids

- Same as the list above
- When kids need to relax eyes necks, shoulders, and wrists for writing
- If they're reversing letters

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Arm Activation

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do Arm Activation

Reach as high as you can toward the ceiling or sky with one arm. Place the other arm behind your head with your hand on your elbow.

Press your extended arm out against your hand, then in, to the back and then to the front. Your hand provides the pressure against your arm.

You'll be moving your hand each time: on the outside of your elbow, the inside of your elbow, the top and the bottom.

What Arm Activation does

Arm Activation relaxes and coordinates your shoulders and arm muscles so writing is easier. Improves breathing, relaxes writer's cramp, and eases over-focus

When to do Arm Activation Yourself:

- When you're getting ready to write
- If you've got writer's cramp
- When you're using tools—anything from a hammer to a water color brush
- If you can't think of what you want to write
- When you can't focus on what you're writing and keep losing track of your thoughts

When to do Arm Activation with kids

- When they're stuck on finishing a report they're writing
- If they're getting ready for a spelling test
- If they're just tired from writing
- If they're struggling with writing, gripping a pencil too tightly, or frowning while writing
- When they can't concentrate on their writing
- If they can't think of something to write about

Balance Buttons

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do Balance Buttons

Put two fingertip behind your right ear (or your left ear) about three finger widths away from your ear. Put your other hand on your navel and hold for 30 seconds or a minute.

Don't forget to breath deeply. Now change hands and hold the Balance Buttons on the other side.

What Balance Buttons do

Balance Buttons stimulate your balance system in the inner ear. Restores your balance, relaxes your eyes and the rest of your body.

When to do Balance Buttons yourself

- If you're feeling queasy on the airplane
- When you need to solve a problem at work
- If you can't make a decision
- Before changing your visual focus. For example, switching from looking at your computer screen to looking down at the paper on your desk.
- When you need to organize all your receipts for doing your taxes

When to do Balance Buttons with Kids

- If they're feeling car sick
- Before getting on the round-and-round whirly gig at the amusement park
- When they need to look at the white-board and then down at the paper on their desk
- When they can't decide what book to read for their book report
- If they're having trouble concentrating on the book they're reading for the book report
- Before they organize their notes for writing the book report

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Belly Breathing

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Belly Breathing

Put your hands on your tummy. Take a deep breath and feel your tummy expanding. Now exhale through your mouth in short little puffs, just like keeping a feather in the air.

What Belly Breathing does

Belly Breathing increases the supply of oxygen to your entire body, especially the brain. Relaxes the central nervous system and gives you more energy. Helps with crossing the midline so reading is improved.

When to do Belly Breathing for yourself

- Before reading aloud to your book club
- When you're tired and wish you had more energy
- If you're having trouble paying attention during the staff meeting.
- When you're hiking and feeling out of breath

When to do Belly Breathing with kids

- When they are asked to read out loud to the whole class
- Before they give a book report
- When they're tired after gym class
- If they're having a hard time paying attention to the math lesson
- When crossing the midline seems hard
- Before reading

Brain Buttons

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Brain Buttons

Find a spot about one inch down from your sternum—it's that notch at the bottom of your throat. Now move your thumb and index finger out from that spot about an inch and feel for two hollow spots. Not sure you've got the right spots? They're vertically parallel to your jaw bone.

While rubbing these Brain Buttons, place your other hand on your navel.

Now slowly look to the right, then to the left and back again. Do this several times.

What Brain Buttons do:

Brain Buttons stimulate the carotid arteries, bringing freshly oxygenated blood to the brain.

They also help establish a sense of right and left or directionality, making it easier to use both eyes for reading, writing, and following directions.

Placing your hand on your navel helps establish the neurological connection to your vestibular system located in the inner ear. The vestibular system helps us know where we are in space when we're standing still or moving. Gives us a sense of our gravitational center.

When to do Brain Buttons for yourself:

- When reading directions for installing the new shelving in your closet
- While working at your computer
- When you realize you're stuck in left-brain analyzing or right-brain visualizing and need both sides of your brain to work equally
- When you need to cross your body's midline for physical activities and sports

When to do Brain Buttons with kids

- When they're getting ready to read
- If they're reversing letters and numbers
- When kids are uncoordinated or have trouble crossing the midline or skipping
- To help with consonant blending
- Keeping their place while reading
- When they're about to write or do spelling
- While working at the computer or keyboard

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The Calf Pump

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do The Calf Pump

Begin by standing an arm's length away from the wall or back of a chair. Place your hands against the wall or chair (Later you can try it without any support as the boy in the picture is doing.)

Put your left leg behind you with the ball of your foot on the floor and your heel raised off the floor. Lean forward, bend your right knee, and press your left heel against the floor. Slowly raise and lower your heel.

Don't forget to breath—exhaling while you press your heel to the floor and inhaling when raising it.

Now reverse, beginning with your right leg behind you.

What The Calf Pump does:

The Calf Pump restores the natural length to the muscles and tendons in the back of your legs. Releases the reflex to hold back which often results in feeling unable to participate. Integrates the back and front brain, releasing fear and unlocking the knees.

When to do The Calf Pump for yourself:

- If you've been procrastinating on a project and just can't seem to get it done
- When you just can't seem to move forward—mentally or physically. In other words, if you're stuck.
- If you've been wearing high heeled shoes.
- When you're finding it hard to concentrate

When to do The Calf Pump with kids

- When they're stuck on a book report or a math problem or their homework
- If the science project they started last month still isn't done and it's due next week.
- When you notice their knees are locked
- If they feel apprehensive or frightened

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Cross Crawl

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Cross Crawl

While standing or sitting (even lying down—then it's called Cross Crawl Sit-ups), "march" in place, alternately touching one hand or elbow to the opposite knee. It's most effective when you Cross Crawl slowly. Be sure to raise your knee as high as you can and twist your body as you Cross Crawl.

What Cross Crawl does

Cross Crawl helps with bilateral integration not only of the right and left brain but also right and left arms and legs.

After a few weeks of Cross Crawl, you'll see an improvement in core postural awareness, muscle proprioception, and vestibular balance. In other words, cross crawl improves not only the ability to cross your body's midline easily and rhythmically, but also your balance, your sense of where you are in space, and your posture. Improve posture and learning is easier.

When to do Cross Crawl for yourself

- When you want more energy
- During any activity that requires visual, auditory, and kinesthetic integration, such as listening, reading, writing. Want to read with both eyes, listen with both ears, move your whole body? Cross Crawl is the answer.
- If you'd like to improve coordination
- When you'd like better spatial awareness. Try Cross Crawl before dancing, ice skating or playing tennis or golf.

When to do Cross Crawl with kids

- When they seem tired and need more energy.
- If they need to improve right and left coordination
- Before reading, writing, and anything else than requires crossing the midline.
- During soccer practice or any other sports activity

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Cross Crawl Sit-ups

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to Cross Crawl Sit-ups

Do Cross Crawl Sit-ups lying on a rug or pad. Put your arms behind your head and raise opposite knee to elbow. Reverse.

Once you've gotten good at this, you can raise your feet off the floor to do the movement. Like riding an imaginary bicycle.

What Cross Crawl Sit-ups do

Cross Crawl Sit-ups provide an awareness of the core, postural muscles and strengthen the abdominal muscles. Integrates left and right brain and left and right sides of the body. Relaxes the lower back.

When to do Cross Crawl Sit-ups for yourself

- When your back is tired
- When you want to cross the midline for improved reading, writing, and playing golf
- To feel more centered and grounded
- When "regular" sit-ups hurt your back

When to do Cross Crawl Sit-ups with kids

- Anytime they need to cross the midline for school: reading, writing, listening, spelling, math
- When they need to feel more centered and grounded
- If they're playing sports or dancing or ice skating.
- When they don't seem aware of the core of their body

Double Doodle

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Double Doodle

Using a different colored marker in each hand, draw mirrored shapes. Once you've mastered that, you can go on to draw mirrored pictures, even a mirrored alphabet.

What Double Doodle does

Double Doodle helps you get ready for activities that require crossing the midline such as writing. Helps establish directionality, and orientation in space in reference to your body's midline. Good for developing the eye-hand coordination that writing requires.

When to do Double Doodle for yourself

- When you're getting ready to work on IEPs (teachers)
- When you have to write a report for your boss
- If you've been procrastinating on a writing project
- When you're doing a poster and you want your writing to be neat.
- If you'd like to give purpose to your doodling

When to do Double Doodle with kids

- When kids are getting ready to do an activity that requires crossing the midline
- When they're doing creative writing like poems or stories
- If they have to write a book report
- Before they start to practice handwriting
- When you're looking for a fun, creative art project

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Earth Buttons

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do Earth Buttons

Put two fingers under your lower lip. Place your hand on your navel with your fingers pointing to the floor.

Take a deep breath and look down to the floor moving only your eyes. Then slowly look up to the ceiling and back down. Do this 2-3 times.

What Earth Buttons do

Earth Buttons are located on the body's front midline. This is the point of reference for all tasks involving both sides of the body.

Holding these points stimulates the brain and gives you more energy. Earth Buttons also increase organizational skills and help you focus on objects that are near to you.

When to do Earth Buttons yourself

- When you're tired
- When you can't see things that are close even though you've got your bifocals on
- If you need to file all those papers on your desk.
- If you feel flustered
- When you're driving and you feel disoriented. (Stop the car first!)

When to do Earth Buttons with kids

- Before they organize all that stuff in their lockers
- When they can't see the chalkboard even though they're wearing their glasses
- When they're sleepy but it's not bedtime
- If they're squinting or staring
- If they keep losing their place when they're reading
- If they can't find a pencil because there's so much junk in their desk. (Helps with the organization skills needed for cleaning out the desk.)

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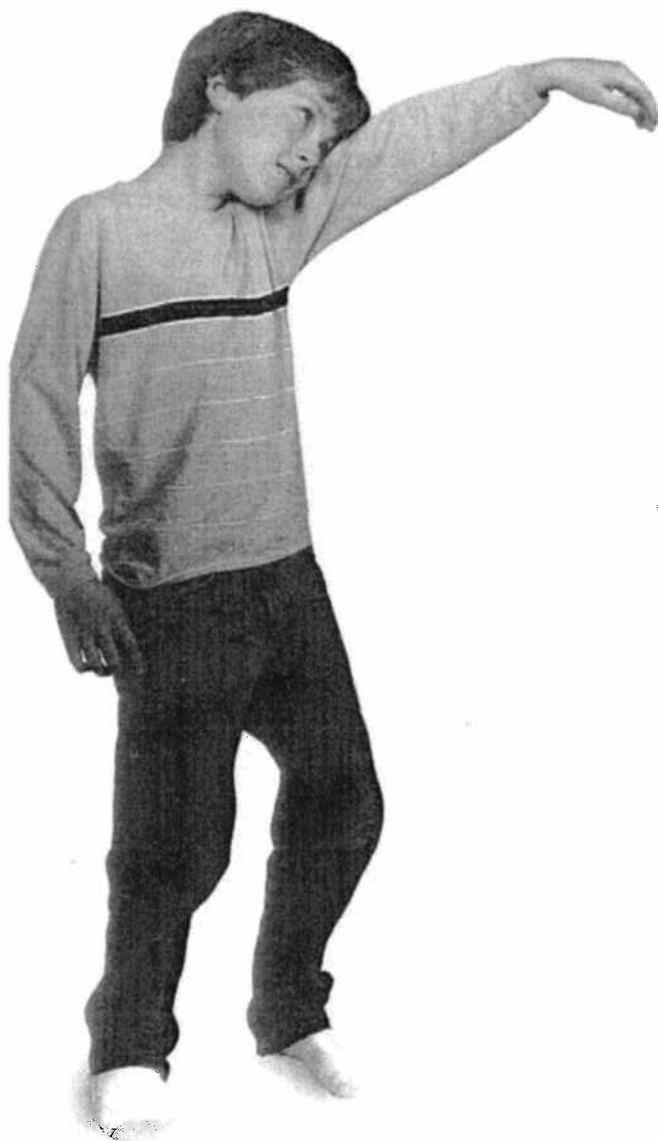
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The Elephant

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do The Elephant

Place your right ear on your right shoulder. Extend your right arm and point ahead. Draw a Lazy eight with your finger. As you come to the bottom of the 8, bend your knees. As you return to the top of the 8, straighten your knees. Be sure that you are moving your arm starting at the center of your body

Do The Elephant 3 or more times and then switch sides.

What The Elephant does

The Elephant crosses the auditory midline as well as crossing the midline of the body. Helps with integrating listening, vision, and whole-body movement. Improves speech, in including listening to one's own voice. Improves depth perception and eye-teaming abilities. Releases muscle tension in the neck.

When to do The Elephant yourself

- When your neck and shoulders are stiff or tense
- If you'd like to listen carefully to a presentation
- When you're trying to figure something out mentally and want to listen more clearly to your own inner voice
- When you want to remember what you've just read

When to do The Elephant with kids

- When they need to listen to their classmates book reports
- If they have to give their own book report
- When they're playing a game in the gym and need to see what their doing, hear what their coach is saying, and coordinate their body movements all at the same time
- If they need help using both eyes to read or watch a video

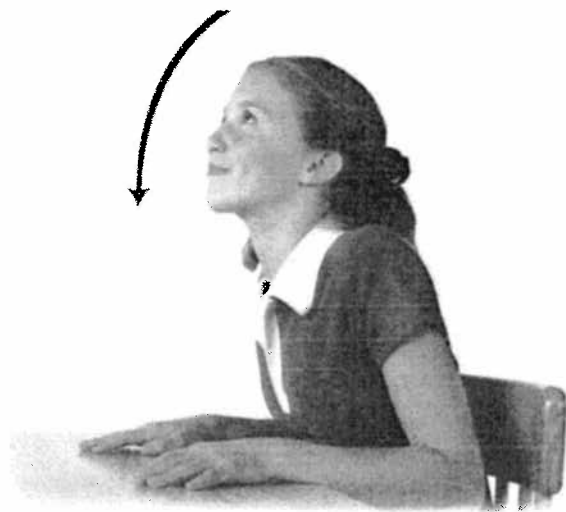
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The Energizer

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do The Energizer

While sitting at your desk or a table, rest your forehead between your hands on the desk. Breathe out. Slowly lift your head, stretching your neck to look up while inhaling.

Exhale and tuck your chin down onto your chest as you move your head back down to the table. Repeat two or three times.

What The Energizer does

The Energizer keeps your back and spine muscles flexible and relaxed. Improves posture, concentration, and attention. Helps with language skills and voice resonance

When to do The Energizer yourself

- When you need a break from working at your desk or computer for too long
- If you feel tense or "stressed out"
- Before talking to the boss about a new project you're proposing
- If you feel short of breath
- When you have to call parents about their children's school work and behavior

When to do The Energizer with kids

- When they need a break from working at their desk
- If they seem tense
- Before they have to give a speech in front of the whole school
- If they're slouching
- When they're getting ready to cross the midline

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Energy Yawn

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do Energy Yawn

Begin to yawn and lightly massage the area around your jaw—the area around the upper and lower back molars. As you massage this area, you'll probably continue to yawn.

What Energy Yawn does

Energy Yawn relaxes the jaw—an area where lots of us hold tension (so much tension that sometimes we have to go to the dentist for TMJ). Increases whole-brain integration. Helps with speech and vocal resonance. Also relaxes the eyes by stimulating lubrication.

Note: Fifty percent of the neurological connections from the brain to the rest of the body go through the joints in the jaw area.

When to do Energy Yawn for yourself

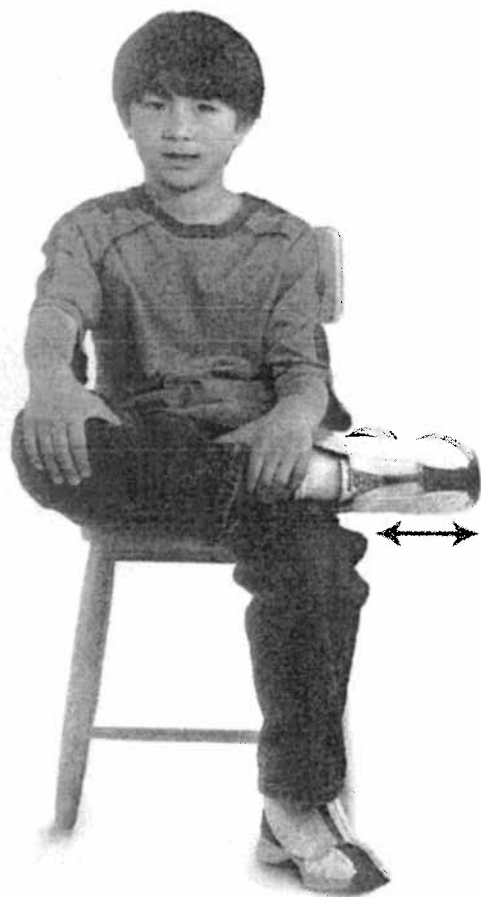
- If your tired or stressed out
- When you feel tenseness in your face and jaw
- Right before that big speech
- If you're singing a solo with your chorus
- If your eyes feel tired

When to do Energy Yawn with kids

- When your class has to sing their song on stage in front of the whole school and their parents
- Before they read aloud
- If they have to give a speech to their after-school club
- When they're tired and not concentrating

Footflex

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do Footflex

Put your right ankle on your left knee (or vice versa). Put one hand behind your right knee at the end of your calf muscle. Put your other hand on your Achilles tendon which is behind your ankle bone.

Point and flex your foot a few times while gently pulling and then releasing behind your knee and at your Achilles tendon.

Now switch and put your left ankle on your right knee and repeat the process.

What Footflex does

Footflex, like Calf pump, helps restore the natural length of the tendons in your calf area. Relaxes the reflex to hold back, keeping you from participating. Helps with communication and concentration.

When to do Footflex yourself

- When you're stuck and can't figure out what to do next
- If you're overwhelmed with too much to do so you're not doing anything
- When you know what you want to write or what you want to say but the words just won't come.
- If you've just procrastinated for two weeks to write your quarterly report for the boss
- When you have to give a speech at a luncheon and you're so anxious you can't figure out what to say

When to do Footflex with Kids

- If they're having a hard time getting along with other children and playing on team sports
- When they aren't understanding what they're reading or hearing
- When they aren't finishing their homework—or even starting it.
- If it's a struggle to write a story about their pet

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The Gravity Glider

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do The Gravity Glider

Sit in a chair with your ankles crossed and your knees slightly bent. Exhale as you lean forward with your head down. Reach out in front of you and glide your arms out to your legs. Reach as far as you can without hurting. (Brain Gym should never hurt.)

Now glide your arms back up until your sitting up straight in your chair. Bring your head up last. Do this two or three times.

Cross your ankles the other way and repeat the movement.

What The Gravity Glider does

Relaxes tense muscles from sitting too long. Increases circulation of blood and lymph. Helps with balance and whole-body coordination. Increases comprehension.

When to do The Gravity Glider for yourself

- After you've been sitting still for a long time
- When you feel stiff
- If you aren't understanding the speech you're listening to
- When you have to keep reading the instructions over and over
- If you're having trouble saying what you mean

When to do The Gravity Glider with kids

- When they've been working at their desk for a long time
- If they can't understand your explanation of the math problem
- When they have to do mental arithmetic
- If they just can't get the words out
- When they aren't paying attention
- When they don't feel confident that they can finish their science project

The Grounder

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do The Grounder

(The Grounder is very similar to the Warrior posture in Yoga.) Stand with your legs a little less than one leg-length apart. Point your left foot toward the left and bend your left knee as you exhale. Keep your right knee straight. Inhale and straighten the bent knee. Keep your body facing forward and your head turned toward the bent knee.

Reverse and do the movement on the other side, bending your right knee.

What The Grounder does

The Grounder lengthens and relaxes the iliopsoas muscle to help balance and stabilize the body. Improves comprehension, short-term and long-term memory. Helps with centering and grounding. Upper part and lower part of your body move as a unified whole.

When to do The Grounder yourself

- If you're hesitant about joining the group
- When you'd like to feel more grounded and centered
- If you feel like you just can't remember anything
- When you'd like your whole body to relax
- If you're just not understanding the directions for a new software program

When to do The Grounder with kids

- If they're holding back from playing on their team
- When they need to memorize their part for the school play
- If their body is stiff and they need to relax
- When they're having trouble expressing themselves and stumbling on their words
- If they don't understand the homework assignment

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Hook-ups, Pt. 1

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Hook-ups, Pt. 1: Cross your left ankle over your right. Extend your arms and cross your left wrist over your right. Bring your palms together and interlace your fingers. Now bring your hands up toward your chin. Sit quietly for a minute with your eyes closed and your tongue on the roof of your mouth.

You may have to help little children do if it's too complicated for them at first.

What Hook-ups does: Relaxes the central nervous system. Connects the electrical circuitry of the body. Crosses the center mid-line to activate both left and right hemispheres of the brain. Helps you become emotionally centered and grounded.

When to use Hook-ups for yourself:

- When you feel stressed out, overwhelmed, or confused
- Anytime you just want to calm down and relax
- When something is upsetting you
- If it's hard to make a decision
- Before settling down to work at a task
- When you want to focus and concentrate
- If you're feeling sad or angry

When to do Hook-ups with kids:

basically the same list as above including

- During timeouts
- When kids are arguing
- Before and during tests
- Too much noise and confusion in the classroom or at home
- Temper tantrums & crying jags
- If kids can't focus on the task at hand and are distracted by everything
- When they're driving you crazy

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Hook-ups, Pt. 2

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Hook-ups, Pt. 2:

Uncross your ankles and put your feet flat on the floor. If you did Hook-ups, Pt. 1, sitting, remain sitting. If you did it standing, remain standing. Now bring your hands together with your fingers touching.

What Hook-ups does: Relaxes the central nervous system. Connects the electrical circuitry of the body. Crosses the center mid-line to activate both left and right hemispheres of the brain. Helps us become emotionally centered and grounded. Pt. 2 helps bring the right and left hemispheres together. Remember: any kind of movement affects and changes brain functioning.

When to use Hook-ups for yourself:

- When you feel stressed out, overwhelmed, or confused.
- Anytime you just want to calm down and relax
- When something is upsetting you.
- If it's hard to make a decision.
- Before settling down to work at a task
- When you want to focus and concentrate
- If you're feeling sad or angry

When to do Hook-ups with kids:

basically the same list as above including

- During timeouts
- When kids are arguing
- Before and during tests
- Too much noise and confusion in the classroom or at home
- Temper tantrums
- Crying jags
- If kids can't focus on the task at hand and are distracted by everything around them

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Lazy 8s

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Lazy 8s

Put one arm in front of you directly in front of your nose and point your thumb to the ceiling. With your thumb, draw a large 8 lying on its side (the infinity sign). Always begin by starting up to the left, down, back to center and up to the right and down. Focus both eyes on your thumb. Your head can move slightly as you draw your 8. Do this 3 times. Switch arms and trace the Lazy 8 with your other thumb. Repeat 3 times. Now both hands together, one thumb on top of the other. Again, trace the Lazy 8 3 times.

You can also do this Lazy 8 on paper, a chalk board, the sidewalk, sand, with poster paints—even shaving cream.

What Lazy 8s do

Lazy 8s integrate the right and left visual fields and the right and left sides of the brain. Improves balance and coordination, especially eye muscle coordination for tracking. Enhances binocular and peripheral vision. Helps with reading.

When to do Lazy 8s for yourself

- When you want to concentrate on difficult reading or technical instructions
- If you're having a hard time tracking words or keeping your place on the page
- When you're not understanding what you're reading
- If your eyes, neck or shoulders feel tense.

When to do Lazy 8s with kids

- When they're reversing letters and numbers
- If they need help with the mechanics of reading—left-to-right eye movement
- If they're having trouble recognizing symbols for the decoding of words
- When they aren't understanding what they're reading
- Before and during reading
- Before and during tests

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Neck Rolls

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do Neck Rolls

Relax your shoulders, drop your head forward as if it were a heavy ball and breathe deeply. Now let your head move slowly from side to side as you continue to breathe deeply. Pretend your chin is drawing a semi-circle across your chest.

What Neck Rolls do

Neck Rolls release tense muscles. Helps when it's difficult to cross the midline. Improves speech and oral reading. Helps with relaxation and breathing.

When to do Neck Rolls for yourself

- When you're feeling tired and tense
- If you feel tightness in your neck or shoulders
- Before giving a speech at the board meeting
- When you need to read aloud to a group
- If you'd like to read more easily and with better comprehension

When to do Neck Rolls with kids

- Right before they go on stage to say their part in the school play
- When they have to read aloud to their class
- If they'd like to improve their reading
- When they're feeling tired, tense, or frightened.
- If crossing the midline is difficult

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The Owl

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do The Owl

Squeeze your right shoulder near your neck with your left hand. Turn your head and look over your right shoulder, come to center, and turn to look over your left shoulder. Exhale when you drop your shoulder to the center. Reverse.

You can make the sound of an owl while you do this exercise. Of course, you don't have to make the sound. But you do have to breathe.

What The Owl does

The owl releases tense muscles in your shoulders and neck, especially the trapezius muscle. Restores the range of motion in your neck so it's easier to move your head to listen. Helps stop squinting and staring. Strengthens neck muscles. Crosses the auditory midline.

When to do The Owl for yourself

- If you've got a stiff neck (obviously you'll do it gently and only turn as far as it's comfortable. Brain Gym should never hurt!)
- If you need to relax your jaw
- When you're playing tennis and you need to see, listen to your tennis coach, and hit the ball with coordinated body movements
- If you have to give a speech
- Anytime you need to cross the midline for reading or writing or anything else

When to do The Owl with kids

- When they're getting ready to play a game against the other school's team
- If the need to listen to a video and see it at the same time
- When they're squinting or staring
- If they're tilting their head or leaning on their elbows on their desk
- When they've been working at the computer for a long time

The Positive Points

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to do The Positive Points:

You'll find your Positive Points above the center of each eyebrow and halfway to your hairline. (You might feel a slight bulge at your Positive Points.)

Gently place three fingers of each hand over these points. Close your eyes and take ten deep breaths. (If children are frightened, they can leave their eyes open.)

Often you'll feel a shift such as a big sigh or dropping your shoulders. The shift lets you know you're finished holding your Positive Points.

Try standing behind a child or adult and holding their Positive Points for them while they sit in Hook-ups.

What The Positive Points do:

The Positive Points are acupressure points which release emotional stress by diffusing the fight-or-flight reflex from the back of the brain.

When to do The Positive Points for yourself:

- When you feel stressed out, overwhelmed, or confused.
- Anytime you just want to calm down and relax
- When something is upsetting you.
- To help get rid of negative and obsessive thoughts
- If you're feeling sad or angry

When to do The Positive Points with kids: same list as above including

- During timeouts
- Too much noise and confusion in the classroom or at home
- Temper tantrums and crying jags
- When they're driving you crazy
- When they're worried, frightened or scared
- When they're anxious about a test or having to read out loud.

The Rocker

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do The Rocker

Sit on a rug or pad while doing The Rocker. Bend your knees with your feet together (or crossed as in the picture) and place your hands behind you.

Your weight will be on your hips and your hands. Rock in small circles back and forth, first on one hip then on the other.

What The Rocker does

Massaging your hamstrings and hips helps release tense muscles that keep you from going forward. Increases the cerebrospinal fluid to brain. This helps you concentrate and understand more easily.

When to do The Rocker yourself

- When you've been sitting for a long time
- If you're having trouble concentrating on learning a new software program
- When you want to breath more deeply
- If you want improved voice resonance before giving that big speech—or asking the boss for a raise

When to do The Rocker with Kids

- When they aren't sitting up straight in their chairs or posture in general is sloppy
- If kids are over-focused (lots of kids labeled ADD will over-focus—when they're focusing.)
- If they want to be more coordinated during games and physical activities
- When they aren't paying attention

Space Buttons

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do Space Buttons

Put two fingers above your upper lip. Put your other hand, pointing toward the floor, on your lower back. Your fingers will be on your tailbone.

Take a deep breath and look up toward the ceiling without moving your head. Slowly look down to the floor and then up to the ceiling again. Do this two or three times.

What Space Buttons do

Space Buttons are located near the top and bottom of your central nervous system. When you hold these points, you stimulate movement throughout the system. Helps you focus on objects that are far away from you.

When to do Space Buttons for yourself

- When you want to pay attention to what you're doing]
- If you don't feel motivated
- To access your intuition for making a decision
- When you have to do bookkeeping
- If you're doing the layout for a poster
- Anytime you want to be more organized

When to do Space Buttons with kids

- When they're acting "crazy" and aren't centered and grounded
- If they're having confusion with horizontal columns, for example, math problems
- When they can't keep their place in reading
- If they're not interested in learning today
- When they can't concentrate on their homework

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The Thinking Cap

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to do The Thinking Cap

Place your fingers on top of each ear. Gently “unroll” the curved parts on the edges of both ears at the same time. Go all the way to the bottom of your ears. You can do this 2-3 times.

What The Thinking Cap does

The Thinking Cap crosses the auditory midline so you can hear out of both ears. This, in turn, helps with auditory recognition, attention, discrimination, perception and memory.

When to do The Thinking Cap for yourself

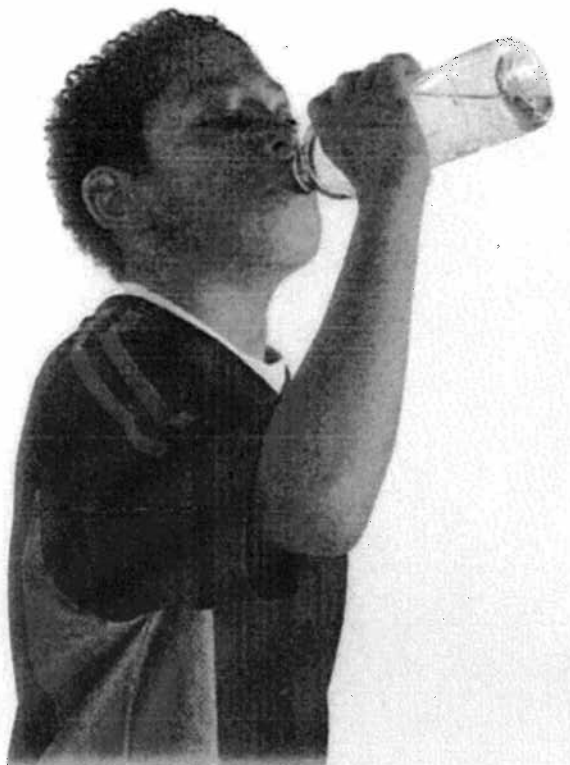
- When you want to “tune out” distracting noises—the lawnmower, your kids music, somebody else’s TV show
- When you want to listen very carefully to what your kids or spouse are saying
- If your boss is giving important instructions
- If you’re at a concert and would like to hear individual voices or instruments.
- If you’re singing in a chorus or playing in a band

When to do The Thinking Cap with kids

- When kids need to listen to directions, stories, each other
- If they’re singing or playing a musical instrument
- If they have to read out loud or give their report to the class
- When the room is too noisy and they need to screen out the distractions

Sipping Water

One of 26 Brain Gym® Movements



How to Sip Water:

No need to gulp icy water. Just plenty of sips of room-temperature water pleases your brain the most. Keep your water bottle handy. At home. At work. In school.

What Water does:

All of the electrical and chemical actions of the brain and central nervous system depend on the conductivity of water. Your brain can't function without water.

When to drink Water yourself

- Anytime, whether you're thirsty or not (Once you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated.)
- Slump time in the afternoon
- When you're stressed out (Stress leaves the body dehydrated.)
- If you're tired
- When you feel hungry for no reason
- To relieve mental fatigue
- During and after exercising or physical activity

When to drink Water if you're a kid

- When you're doing your work at school
- Before and during tests
- While doing your homework
- When you've been running around and playing outside
- After riding your bike
- During soccer practice
- When you're thirsty
- When you're not thirsty
- If you feel tired

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Think of an X

One of 26 Brain Gym Movements



How to Think of an X

It's all in the name: Just think of an X. Draw an imaginary line from your left shoulder to your right foot, from your right shoulder to your left foot. Draw an X on a piece of paper. Hang an X on the wall and look at it. Picture an X in your head. Look for things in the shape of an X around you and focus on them. (You may be surprised at how few X's are in our visual field.)

What Thinking of an X does

Thinking of an X helps integrate the left and right sides of the brain and the right and left visual fields. Reminds you to use both sides of your body and both eyes. Reinforces whole-body coordination which makes learning, communicating and performing easier.

When to Think of an X yourself:

- When you're getting ready to play golf or go bowling
- When you're having a hard time concentrating on the boss's speech or your principal's directions.
- If you can't read the map for your vacation road trip
- During planning and scheduling priorities for your team's project

When to Think of an X with kids

- When they're getting ready to write their dinosaur report. Thinking of an X will help them get their thoughts organized
- If they're not listening to or understanding the directions for doing their science project.
- Before the big soccer game on Saturday
- When they want to do better in math, spelling, reading, writing—all those academic skills that require crossing the midline.

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mjw@mjwagner.com * www.BrainBoostersForYourKids.com * www.BrainGymClasses.com

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 Graphics of Brain Gym Movements produced by Hearts at Play, Inc. for Edu-Kinesthetics, Inc.

Descriptions of Brain Gym Movements from Paul Dennison and Gail Dennison, *Brain Gym Teacher's Edition* (Ventura, CA: Rev. ed. 1994)
 and Jerry Teplitz, Paul Dennison, and Gail Dennison, *Brain Gym for Business* (Ventura, CA: 1997)

Using Activities As Silent Signals

In some classrooms, teachers use the Brain Gym 26 to set up nonverbal cues to enhance the exchange of information. Students enjoy having this way to communicate without creating interruptions, and appreciate having their silent signals "heard" and responded to.

Here are a few such cues that teachers and students have agreed upon. You might like to teach your own students some of these, or let the children create some meanings of their own to meet the needs of the classroom:

Brain Buttons (or PACE) ~ "Can we slow down?" or "I need to find my pace with this."

The Thinking Cap ~ "Please speak louder" or "I'm not getting this."

Arm Activation to the side, with a "V" hand signal ~ "Quiet, please" (to let other students know that the teacher is getting ready to begin).

The seated Cross Crawl ~ "How about a movement break?"

The Footflex ~ "I need some discussion about this to understand it."

Belly Breathing ~ "I need to pause and relax."

Hook-ups ~ "Let's discuss this calmly."

Positive Points ~ "I'm not getting this yet."

Balance Buttons ~ "Is there another point of view?"

The Energy Yawn ~ "Can we discuss this in greater depth?"

Space Buttons ~ "I need to see more of the big picture on this topic."

Earth Buttons ~ "I need to see more of the details on this topic."











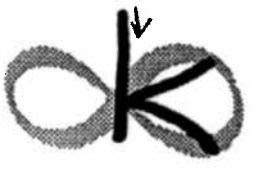
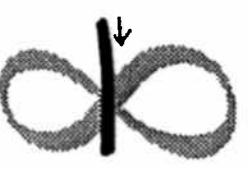



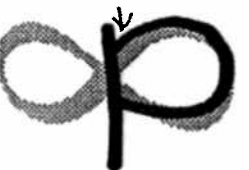



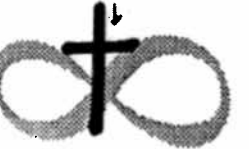



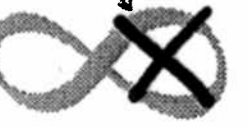


The Double Doodle ~ "Let's play!"

And here's a friendly and relaxing "hello": **Draw a small Lazy 8 on someone's back.**

A large rectangular frame composed of question marks in rounded square boxes. The top and bottom edges each consist of 14 boxes, and the left and right edges each consist of 14 boxes. The interior of the frame is filled with 14 horizontal lines, creating a space for writing.

A large rectangular frame composed of question marks in rounded square boxes. The top and bottom edges each consist of 15 boxes, and the left and right edges each consist of 15 boxes. The interior of the frame is filled with 15 horizontal lines, creating a space for writing.

A Detailed Look at Brain Gym®'s

		Alphabet 8s	
			
			
			
			
			
			

Source: Information gathered from the works of Paul E. Dennison, Ph.D. and Gail Dennison, graphic by Kari Swanson, MAT, Brain Gym Consultant

The Brain Gym® Action Balance Wheel

Communication
 The Laterality Dimension
 Thinking/The Robot



Comprehension
 The Focus Dimension
 Sensing/The Penguin



Organization
 The Centering Dimension
 Feeling/The Swimmer

