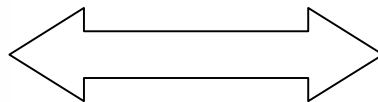




Brain Gym & Nutrition for Enhanced Learning

The Three main types of Brain Gym movements are:

- 1. Midline:** activities which cross the vertical midline that help to integrate the left and right hemispheres of the brain, so that the whole brain works efficiently, by encouraging bilateral movement, binocular vision and binaural hearing activity, and whole body coordination.
- 2. Lengthening:** activities that help students to "make connections between what they already know in the back of the brain, and the ability to process and express that information in the front of the brain."
- 3. Energising:** activities that facilitate the flow of electromagnetic energy throughout the body, supporting our sense of directionality, space awareness, centredness and focus.



The Human Brain

Midline Activities

Cross Crawl

This exercise helps coordinate right and left brain by exercising the information flow between the two hemispheres. It is useful for spelling, writing, listening, reading and comprehension.

Stand or sit. Put the right hand across the body to the left knee as you raise it, and then do the same thing for the left hand on the right knee just as if you were marching.



Variations:

- Opposite knees and hands up in the air
- Reach behind to touch the opposite foot
- Slow motion full extent reach in opposite directions
- Marching, crawling, skipping in a cross pattern

LAZY 8's

This crosses the visual midline without interruption.

Useful for reading, decoding written symbols, reading comprehension, and long term associative memory.

Draw the figure 8 three times in the air or on paper with the left hand first. This will activate the right side of the brain. Begin on the midpoint. Move up and over in an anticlockwise direction. The eyes should follow the fingers and the neck should be relaxed. Do it three times with each hand and then with both hands together.

ALPHABET 8s: Write the letters of the alphabet as per the diagram. Practise your Lazy 8 activity before doing this one. Useful for fine motor skills, handwriting, creative writing and spelling.

ELEPHANT

This activates the inner ear for improved balance and equilibrium and integrates the brain for listening with both ears.

Useful for listening, speech, spelling, memory for sequences.

Bend your knees, glue your head to your shoulder and point across the room. Use your ribs to move your whole upper body as you trace a LAZY 8. Look past your fingers. Repeat with the other arm.

NECK ROLLS

This releases tension and should be done before reading to encourage binocular and binaural activity.

Breathe deeply, relax your shoulders and drop your head forward.

Allow your head to slowly roll from side to side as you breathe out any tightness. Your chin draws a smooth curve across your chest as your neck relaxes, but should not pass either clavicle.

Roll with shoulders up, release shoulders and roll with shoulders down:

- with eyes open, with eyes closed.

BELLY BREATHING

Efficient breathing enhances the oxygen supply to the brain.

Rest your hand on your abdomen. Blow out all of the old air in short, soft little puffs. Take a slow, deep breath, filling up gently, like a balloon. Your hand softly rises as you inhale and falls as you exhale. Count for three as you inhale, hold your breath for three, and exhale for three. Practise until this becomes rhythmic and automatic. Music may help.

Lengthening Activities

OWL

This crosses the auditory midline and is useful for listening, speech, maths and memory.

Grasp your shoulder and squeeze the muscle firmly. Turn your head to look over your shoulder. Breathe deeply and pull your shoulders back. Now look over the other shoulder, opening the shoulders again. Drop your chin to your chest and breathe deeply, letting the muscles relax. Repeat with hand squeezing the opposite shoulder. Repeat with the head tilted forward to release neck muscles.

ARM ACTIVATION

This lengthens the muscles of the upper chest and shoulders and helps the muscular control for both gross motor and fine motor activity.

Hold one arm next to the ear. Exhale gently through pursed lips while activating the muscles by pushing the arm against the other hand in 4 directions (front, back, in & away).

CALF PUMP

This helps to restore the length of the tendons in the feet and lower legs. It integrates the back brain and the front brain and is useful for listening and reading comprehension, writing and processing information.



As you lean forward onto the back of a chair, put one foot forward and exhale, press the back heel gently to the ground. As you release, lift your heel up and take a deep breath. Repeat three times on each side. The more you bend your forward knee, the more lengthening you feel in the back of the calf.

GRAVITY GLIDER

This releases tension in the hips, pelvis and hamstrings and aids in finding comfortable standing and sitting positions.

It is useful for reading comprehension, mental arithmetic and organisational skills.

Sit comfortably. Cross your ankles. Keep your knees relaxed. Bend forward and reach out in front of you, letting your arms glide down as you exhale and up as you inhale. Repeat to the left, right, centre. Change legs and repeat.

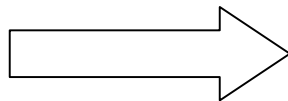
Energising Activities

Water

Water constitutes approximately 75% of our body weight. Drinking water increases electrical and chemical action between the brain and the nervous system.

Helps with:

- Efficient storage and retrieval of information.
- All academic skills



Brain Buttons

These are the soft tissue which is positioned under the clavicles. They are positioned above the carotid arteries which supply fresh oxygenated blood to the brain, which helps to 'switch it on'.

Massaging the brain buttons stimulates the blood supply to the brain, which then helps to activate many areas of the body.

Helps with:

- Crossing the visual midline for reading
- Body coordination
- Correction of reversals
- Improved concentration skills required for reading, writing etc

How to do Brain Buttons

Put one hand so that there is as wide a space as possible between the thumb and index finger.

Place your index and thumb into the slight indentations below the collar bone on each side of the sternum. Press lightly in a pulsing manner.

At the same time put the other hand over the navel area of the stomach. Gently press on these points for about 2 minutes.

Hook Ups

These connect the electrical circuits in the body. The mind and body relax as energy circulates through areas blocked by tension.

This works well for nerves before a test or special event such as making a speech. Any situation which will cause nervousness calls for a few "hook ups" to calm the mind and improve concentration.

Stand or sit. Cross the left ankle over the right.

Cross the left wrist over the right wrist, and interlace fingers
Bend the elbows out and gently turn the fingers in towards the body until they rest on the sternum (breast bone) in the centre of the chest. Keep the ankles crossed and the wrists crossed and then breathe evenly in this position for a few minutes. You will be noticeably calmer after that time.

Thinking Caps

This relaxes tension in the cranial bones, and helps the student to focus attention on his hearing.

Use the thumbs and index fingers to pull the ears back and unroll them. Begin at the top of the ear and gently massage down and around the curve, ending at the lobe.

ENERGIZER ~ Rest your forehead between your hands. Breathe out all tension. Then quietly breathe in as the air fills up your midline. Your head easily lifts up, forehead first, followed by your neck and upper body. Your lower body and shoulders stay relaxed. Exhale as you tuck your chin down into your chest. Pull your head forward, lengthening the back of your neck. Relax and breathe deeply.

Brain Gym enhances the development of neural pathways in the brain through movement.

The activities are easy and enjoyable. They bring about rapid and often dramatic improvements in focus, comprehension, communication, organisation and physical movement.