

15 Second Breaks

This is a list of activities and strategies to use with individual students or within a classroom. These ideas are to provide periodic, brief breaks throughout the school day to keep the students alert so they are better able to pay sustained attention during class time.

1. Desk push-ups: stand at desk, put full weight on arms and lift feet off the ground.
2. Chair push ups: sitting in a chair, hold onto the sides and lift body up and down.
3. Fingers fidgets: allow squish/stress balls, Koosh balls, silly putty, an elastic band in desk.
4. Allow a sports bottle to drink from; the sucking has a calming effect.
5. Chair stretches: sitting in chair lean side to side, reach to ceiling and to the floor, turn side to side, stretch out legs.
6. Wall push: try to “move” the wall.
7. Lights out: turn out the lights for a short break; turn on the lights to start a lesson.
8. Let the students run classroom errands; lunch count, attendance, work room.
9. Allow quick bathroom or drink breaks during class time.
10. Have the whole reading group run a lap before sitting down to read. Do five jumping jacks before math etc.
11. Chewing gum, gummy bears or crunching on pretzels is helpful for assisting students organize and focus better. If not at school, gum while doing homework may help the completion rate.
12. Incorporate work stations into you classroom (1-2 empty desks or tables) that kids can move to do their work.
13. Play 15 seconds of “follow the leader”, giving individuals the opportunity to lead the class.
14. Sing a song or play music for short breaks
15. Do different activities in different positions (e.g. on the chalk board, on the floor or the wall in the hallway, sitting/lying on the floor in the classroom, on knees working on chair etc.)