

CLASSROOM FRIENDLY MOVEMENT BREAKS

Students with attention difficulties need to **MOVE** to maintain an optimal level of arousal. It is important to channel the student's energy into more acceptable avenues and incorporate directed but non-disruptive movement in the classroom.

Try to schedule a change in activities frequently and schedule activities so that periods of sitting are alternated with periods of movements. **Stretch and movement breaks are needed for every 10 minutes of seated listening or seated work.** Movement breaks can be simple – several ideas are outlined below.

Class Activities:

- Have the whole group run a lap before sitting down to read. Do five jumping jacks before math, etc.
- Build in **stretch or exercise breaks** during periods of prolonged sitting. These could be used in context of Simon Says/Follow the Leader (i.e. sitting in chair lean side to side, reach to ceiling and to floor, turn side to side, stretch out legs, jumping jacks, cross country ski jumps, hopping in various directions, yoga positions).
- **Structure activities so that built-in opportunities for movement are provided.** Incorporate workstations into your classroom (1-2 empty desks or tables) that students can move to do their work. Allow quick bathroom or drink breaks during class time.
- Wall push: try to 'move' the wall; Desk push-ups: stand at desk and put full weight on arms and lift feet off the ground; Chair push-ups: sitting in chair, hold onto sides and lift body up and down.
- Animal walks between activities – hop like bunnies, slide like snakes, jump like frogs, gallop like a horse, fly like a bird, crawl like a crab, etc.
- Use action songs or poems with movement; Dance to music; Lead a marching band



Individual Activities:

- Have students **wear a 'heavy' backpack** when walking to/from school and between classes.
- Permit students who cannot sit for very long to **work in various positions**, (i.e. work on the chalkboard, lying on the floor, standing, kneeling).
- Provide the student with **manipulatives to fidget with** and provide heavy work to the hands, (i.e. koosh/stress ball, silly putty, elastic bank) as long as it stays within their hand is not a distracter to others.
- Let the student **run classroom errands:**
 - Place chairs on desks at the end of the day/take down at the beginning of the day
 - Help rearrange desks in the classroom. Wash desks.
 - Deliver 'heavy' boxes of books, or move packs of copy paper from the storage area to the copy centre
 - Help move gym mats, hang them up, etc. Push heavy carts.
 - Hole punch/staple papers to be handed out to the classroom. Staple papers onto bulletin boards
 - Help pass out papers/objects to classmates
 - Deliver attendance to the office
 - Hold open heavy doors for the class
- Sucking water from a water bottle, chewing gum, gummy bears, raisins, fruit roll ups or crunching on pretzels, crackers, and rice cakes are helpful in assisting students to organize themselves and focus better.