Greeley-Evans District 6 Secondary Classroom Brain Energizers Resource Guide
The Importance of Classroom Brain Energizers

The Problem:

• Only 27% of high school students meet the daily recommendations for physical activity (State of obesity, 2016)

• Low levels of physical activity and aerobic fitness are associated with declines in academic achievement, cognitive abilities, brain structure, and brain function (Castelli, Hillman, Buck, & Erwin, 2007).

• Currently, only 3.8% of high schools provide regular PA breaks (Lee, Burgeson, Fulton & Spain, 2007)

The Research:

• Student on-task behavior increased 10% after a 10-minute PA break was implemented (Howie, Beets, Pate, 2015)

• A 10-min classroom exercise break moderately improved math performance in students compared with a seated classroom lesson (Howie, Schatz, Pate, 2015)

• Physically active academic lessons of moderate intensity improved overall performance on a standardized test of academic achievement by 6% compared to a decrease of 1% from students not exposed to physically active lessons (Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011)

• Classroom-based PA have favorable associations with indicators of cognitive functioning, academic behaviors, and academic achievement (CDC, 2010)

• No evidence suggests allotting classroom time for PA was negatively associated with academic achievement (CDC, 2010)
Top Ten Implementation Strategies

1. Tell your students why doing a brain energizer matters
   • E.g., PA breaks make you more on-task, it helps create more blood flow to the brain which help students think better, and it’s good for your health!

2. Do the brain energizer with your students
   • If you participate with your students, they are more likely to join in

3. Make modifications to keep students safe
   • If needed, modify some of the PA breaks so it ensures that all students can participate and keep from anyone getting injured

4. Have your students lead the brain energizer
   • Once the class feels comfortable, have your students try leading

5. Make it apart of your everyday schedule
   • Having it already engrained in your schedule will let your students know that this is part of their daily routine

6. Implement brain energizer halfway through class period
   • Students prefer to have a PA break at the halfway mark to help them reset their minds and refocus.
   • This can also help the teacher transition into the next lesson/activity

7. Don’t be afraid to try a brain energizer over 5-minutes
   • Research shows that PA breaks 5-minutes or longer have more positive effects on learning and students prefer it as well!

8. Move desks and chairs to create a movement space
   • If needed, move desks and chairs to create an activity space that gives the class plenty of room to move

9. During the brain energizer have your students interact with each other
   • Students prefer during the activity break to socialize and or even compete with a partner!

10. Students enjoy music during the brain energizers
    • The more upbeat the class is the more likely students will engage in the activity

* To help students refocus after the brain energizer, have the class do 30 seconds of deep breathing
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Resources compiled by Peter Stoepker, Doctoral Student, University of Northern Colorado, 2017
Title: 1-Minute Cardio Blast

Time: 1-minute

Space: Students stand up right next to desk

Equipment: High energy music

Activity details:
1. 10 seconds of a slow jog in place
2. 10 seconds of high knees
3. 10 seconds of medium jog in place
4. 10 seconds of bottom kickers
5. 10 seconds of jumping jacks
6. 10 seconds of sprinting in place
Title: 1-Minute Lunge Challenge

Time: 1-Minute

Space: Students stand up right next to desk

Equipment: High energy music

Activity details:
• Students stand by their desks and do as many lunges as they can in 60 Seconds
Title: 1-Minute Chair Squats

Time: 1-Minute

Space: Students preform activity at desk/chair

Equipment: Chair or desk and high energy music

Activity details:

1. Students try to do as many chair squats as they can in 1-minute.
2. See if they can get more than their neighbor!
Title: 30-Seconds of Pushups to 30-Seconds Plank

Time: 1-minute

Space: Enough space between chairs/desks where students can lay down

Equipment: High energy music

Activity details:
• Have students do pushups for 30-seconds followed by a 30-second plank
Title: Minute Masters

Time: 1-5 minutes

Space: Students stand right next to desk

Equipment: High energy music

Activity Details:

1. Display a list of different exercises for all to see on the wall or board.
2. Set the timer for the designated time and at each minute the students perform an exercise of choice.
3. Each student may choose different exercises or stay on the same one each minute. Let the choice be the student’s. This will help give the student ownership and they will be more likely to perform the activity.

Some suggested exercises:

- Jumping Jacks
- Marching in place
- Jogging in place
- Alternating lunges
- Twisting
- Stationary Jumping
• **Title:** 2-minute stretch break
• **Time:** 2-minutes
• **Space:** Students stand right next to desk
• **Equipment:** Chair/Desk
• **Activity details:**
  • Students stretch 15 seconds per muscle
Title: Nickelodeon Pose with the Shows

Time: 3-minutes

Space: Students stand right next to desk

Equipment: Computer and projection screen

Activity details:
• Click this link to play video to have your students move like a Nickelodeon character

Title: Go with the Pro

Time: 3-4 minutes

Space: Students stand right next to desk

Equipment: Computer and projection screen

Activity details:
• Click this link to play video and have students race like a pro

https://app.gonoodle.com/channels/go-with-the-pro/400m-sprint?source=channel
Title: Introduction to Yoga

Space: Students stand right next to desk

Time: 3-5 minutes

Equipment: Calm/Relaxing music

Activity details:

- Preform each move for 10 seconds
- Stand on one leg with straight knee (switch legs)
- Stand on one leg while slightly moving the other to balance (switch legs)
- Raise knee to chest (flex foot; switch legs)
- Touch knee to chin (switch legs)
- Bring hands to heart (elbows in; switch legs)
- Clap hands 15 times (switch legs)
- Make a triangle (switch legs)
- Hop 10 times on each leg (triangle form; switch legs)
Title: Task Master

Time: 3-5 minutes

Space: Normal classroom space with room for moving down desk/chair rows

Equipment: Chairs

Activity details:

1. Have students stand up and push in their chairs. Explain that you are going to give them a series of tasks and the goal is to complete them as quickly as possible.

2. Direct students that once they have completed the task, they should stop where they are and raise their hand.

3. For the first task have students touch 10 chairs not in a row. For the next task have students touch elbows with 8 classmates.

4. For the next task, alternating boy/girl/boy/girl, touch knees with 4 classmates with a different hair color.

5. For the last task, touch toes with 6 classmates wearing 6 different colored shirts

https://www.fueluptoplay60.com/tools?id=15749467
Title: Stand Up for Vocabulary
Time: 3-5 minutes
Space: Students stand right next to desk
Equipment: Chairs/Desk
Activity details:
1. Create a poem or song using vocabulary words that all start with the same letter.
2. Every time a word starting with that letter is said or sung have students stand up or sit down.
Title: 3-5-Minute Standing Abs

Time: 3-5 minutes

Space: Students stand right next to desk

Equipment: High energy music

Activity details
  • Have the students stand next to their desks and preform each move for 30 seconds
**Title:** 3-Minute Seated Yoga

**Time:** 3-minutes

**Space:** Students stay at desk/chair

**Equipment:** Desk/chair and relaxing music

**Activity details:**
- Perform each move for 30-seconds at desk
Title: Beach Ball Blast

Time: 1-5 minutes

Space: Push desks aside for enough for the class to create a large circle

Equipment: Beach ball

Activity details:

1. Have the entire class form a circle
2. Label each color of the beach ball a different exercise
3. After the third consecutive hit the student will catch the ball
4. Whichever the closest color the students right thumb is touching the entire class will need to perform the physical activity
5. The class will perform the activity for 15 seconds

Activities to potentially choose:

- High Knees
- Jogging in place
- Pick a muscle to stretch
- Butt Kicks
- Jumping Jacks
• **Title:** 5-Minute Clear Your Mind Walk  
• **Time:** 5-minutes  
• **Space:** Access to a hallway or outdoors  
• **Equipment:** None

**Activity details:**

1. Have your students take a 5-minute break to go for a leisure walk  
2. The walk should not be fast paced  
3. Encourage them socialize about something that is going on in their lives  
4. Try to have them pick someone that they don’t normally hang out with
• **Title:** Classroom Physical Activity Challenge
• **Time:** 5-minutes
• **Space:** The entire classroom
• **Equipment:** None

**Activity details:**

1. Split your classroom into half (two teams)
2. Choose a student on each team to start
3. Each student is responsible for creating an exercise
4. Each exercise will be preformed for 10 repetitions until the next student can shout out a new exercise
5. The competition ends once each student had shouted out a new exercise and the entire team has completed all of them

*Remember, a new exercise cannot start until the entire team completes 10 repetitions*
• **Title:** Class Dance  
• **Time:** 3-5 minutes  
• **Space:** Students stand right next to desk  
• **Equipment:** None  
• **Activity details:**  
  1. Create a dance sequence one move at a time by calling out a move.  
  2. Add one move each time through the sequence. (Have the next student repeat the previous move(s) and then add their own move.)  
  3. Moves could include: stomp left, high five, jump twice, spin in a circle, squat, etc.  
  4. Challenge! As a class try to repeat the entire sequence!
Six to ten minute PA breaks
Title: Rock Paper Scissors with Feet  

Time: 6-10 minutes  

Space: The entire classroom (no desk/chairs need to be moved)  

Equipment: None  

Activity details:  
1. Have students stand up and pair up  
2. Have the students jump up three times saying rock, paper, and scissors  
3. Rock is with the feet together.  
4. Paper is with the feet spread apart.  
5. Scissors is placing the feet in a crisscrossed position.  
6. The winner from each pair moves on and finds another winning student to play.  
7. Continue until every student has played each other
Title: Classroom Physical Activity Stations

Time: 6-Minutes

Space: The entire classroom (move desk/chairs if needed)

Equipment: Three signs (representing different types of physical activities)

Activity details:

1. The teacher will place a minimum of three signs, illustrating a type of physical activity (e.g., jogging in place, jumping in place, Tae Bo boxing jabs), in three different areas of the room.

2. Assign students to each of the three areas of the room.

3. Instruct students to perform the activity for one minute.

4. After one minute, students will rotate clockwise to a new area.

5. Rotate two times through the stations

http://tennessee.gov/education/topic/coordinated-school-health
Title: Play Cards

Time: 6-10 minutes

Space: The entire classroom (move desk/chairs if needed)

Equipment: 1 deck of standard playing cards

Activity details:
1. Using a standard card deck
2. Assign an activity to each of the four suits.
3. (ex: jumping in place, running in place, sit-ups, squats)
4. Pass out a card to each student and they have to do the activity for that suit for 30 seconds. Have students pass their cards to their neighbor and repeat for at least 10 passes.
5. Add a twist: have students perform the activity the number of times designated on the card.

Title: Student Led 10-Minute PA Break

Time: 10-minutes

Space: Talk over with students to determine how much space they need

Equipment: None (unless students suggest otherwise)

Activity details:
1. Pick a student or two to led the 10-minute PA break
2. Give them at least a day’s notice to prepare
3. Let them know how much time they have and how much space they are allowed to use
4. See how creative they can be!
Integrating PA with academic content
Title: 10-Minute Physical Activity Challenge

Time: 10-minutes

Space: The entire classroom (move desk/chairs if needed)

Equipment: None

Activity details:

1. Each exercise will be performed for 30 seconds

2. After the 30 seconds is completed the student must yell out to another student

3. Once name of the student is yelled out the student then is responsible for adding a new physical activity movement

4. Example:
   - Student 1 starts with lunges yells out a name
   - Student 2 states the next exercise is jumping jacks
Title: Find Your Partner

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Space: The entire classroom (move desk/chairs if needed)

Equipment: Index cards

Activity details:

1. Use to review for a test
2. Come up with 3-5 review questions and answers.
3. On an index card, write the questions.
4. Students are scattered throughout the classroom. The teacher will say start with question number 1 and walk to a partner across the room.
5. Each student will walk briskly to find a partner and identify the answer to that question.
6. The teacher will then say start question number 2. Tippy toe to a different partner.
7. This continues for three to five minutes.
8. As a review, the teacher can say find your question number 1 partner and students will find their original partner relative to that question.
9. Variations: Use different movements to find a partner. Have students create the questions. Use music as students are finding a partner. Time students (e.g., give students ten seconds to find a partner)
Title: Active Quiz
Time: 5 to 10 minutes
Space: Students stand right next to desk
Equipment: Computer and Projection screen

Activity details:
1. Create a list of TRUE or FALSE questions
2. Read the statement
3. Students determine whether it is true or false
4. On signal, jump 3 times, show your answer
   • Make your body into the letter T for true
   • Make your body into the letter F for false
5. Repeat for as many questions that were created
Title: Team Quiz Hustle

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Space: The entire classroom (move desk/chairs if needed)

Equipment: 4 designated stations in the classroom (no equipment is needed), 4 Quiz/Physical Activity cards (pieces of paper/card stock for quiz question and activity)

- Create 4 quiz/physical activity cards (1 card per station). Write a quiz question on 1 side of the card and a physical activity on the other side of the card (e.g., 20 jumping jacks, jog in place for 30 seconds, imaginary jump rope for 25 seconds).
- Place a quiz question/physical activity card at each numbered station. The card should be placed with the quiz question face down and the physical activity face up.
- Divide the class into teams of 3 to 4, with each team starting at a different exercise station (the number of stations may vary).
- Write the answers to the questions on separate pieces of paper that are numbered according to the station and taped to the chalkboard face down.

Activity details:

1. On signal, the team performs the physical activity and then turns the card over to read the question. As a team, they decide on the answer, and 1 person walks to the chalkboard to determine if the group has the correct answer.
2. If their answer is correct, they proceed to the next station.
3. If their answer is incorrect, they go back to the station and repeat the activity. They then move to the next station and repeat the sequence.
4. The first team to complete all stations is the winner.
Title: Physical Activity Jeopardy

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Space: Students stand right at desk

Equipment: Computer and projection screen

Activity details:

1. Help class prepare for an exam by playing Jeopardy

2. Each category of Jeopardy has an exercise associated with it

3. Before the students can answer the question they must perform exercise that is assigned to each category for 10 repetitions

4. For double Jeopardy questions they must perform the exercise 20 repetitions

*If students are placed in groups the entire group must complete the required amount of repetitions before the group can answer the question
Title: Partner Walk and Reflection

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Space: Access to hallway and or outdoors

Equipment: None

Activity details:
1. Have your class find a partner
2. While walking they must reflect on current lesson and come up with three questions that they have before the walk is over
3. Once the walk is over, have each group share at least one question that they have
Title: Standing classroom

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Space: Students stand right at desk

Equipment: None

Activity details:

• Halfway through lecture:
  • Allow students to stand up
  • While they are standing encourage them to stretch and or move in place on their own
  • Allow students to do this as long as you would like during their lecture
  • Students can sit down whenever they would like
Title: Flash Up, Flash Down

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Space: Students stand right at desk

Equipment: Scrap pieces of paper

Activity details:

1. Provide each student with pieces of scrap paper.

2. Ask the students a review question and have the students quickly write their answers on the paper.

3. Call out “3–2–1 Flash Up!” and have the students jump out of their desks (or simply stand up) and show their answers to the front of the class.

4. Call out “Flash Down!” and the students sit while you review the correct answer to the question.
Title: Student Led Check for Understanding

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Space: The entire classroom (move desk/chairs if needed)

Equipment: None

Activity details:

1. Pick 2-3 students to lead check for understanding
2. Have the rest of the class get into groups of 3-4
3. The student leaders will ask 5 questions related to the lesson
4. Before each question is asked a certain activity is required
5. The first group that gets the answer correctly gets a point

Suggestions of activities to do before each question:

- Jog in place
- High Knees
- Jumping Jacks
- Chair squats
- Air punches
**Title:** Math in action

**Time:** 3-5 minutes

**Space:** The entire classroom (move desk/chairs if needed)

**Equipment:** None

**Activity details:**

1. Have teacher state of couple of problems, then move to students shouting out a problem

2. For every answer that equals a:
   1. Positive number-Jumping Jacks
   2. Negative number-Toe touch stretch
   3. Zero-Arm circles

3. Continue to do the activity until the teacher/student shouts out a new math problem
Online Resources

- [https://www.fueluptoplay60.com/playbooks/current-seasons-pla](https://www.fueluptoplay60.com/playbooks/current-seasons-pla)
- [https://www.gonoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com)
- [http://take10.net](http://take10.net)
- [http://www.jamschoolprogram.com](http://www.jamschoolprogram.com)
- [http://www.thewalkingclassroom.org](http://www.thewalkingclassroom.org)
- [TAHPERD Physical Activity Taskforce 2007](http://www.Teenhealth.org)
- [www.Teenhealth.org](http://www.Teenhealth.org)
- [https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@fc/documents/downloadable/ucm_455767.pdf](https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@fc/documents/downloadable/ucm_455767.pdf)
- [https://www.ecu.edu/cs-hhp/exss/upload/Energizers_for_Grades_K_2.pdf](https://www.ecu.edu/cs-hhp/exss/upload/Energizers_for_Grades_K_2.pdf)
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