



Kinaesthetic Classroom

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NB: This resource has been created with Covid19 restrictions in mind. The activities have been chosen with limited movement around classrooms and social distancing at the forefront.

Movement Activities - Cross the Midline

These activities will be suitable for all year groups, abilities, and fitness levels. They can be implemented in **one to three-minute timeframes** throughout lessons. Activities that cross the midline support skills such as reading and writing as both hemispheres of the brain are involved in these activities.

Ideal times of the day to carry out these activities:

- At the start of the day
- Between lessons
- When children start to show signs of boredom or are restless
- While teaching and when reviewing content

Full Body Crossing Movements

Grapevine

A lateral movement where children face forwards as they move sideways.

- Take the right foot and step to the right
- Then with the left foot cross it over in front of the right
- Step out to the right
- Then bring left foot and cross it behind the right foot
- Step out to the right.
- Then travel to the left, step out with left, cross with right in front, step, cross behind and step.
- Repeat movement as appropriate. As children become more confident, they can increase speed.

Heel taps

Stand shoulder width apart and hands by the side.

- Bend the left knee (in front of them) so heel of foot is just above the right knee
- Tap the left heel with the right hand
- Then bend the knee (behind them) so heel of foot is above the back of the right knee
- Tap left heel with the right hand
- Repeat with the opposite side – bend right knee and tap right heel with left hand.

Windmills

Children stand with feet wide apart and arms stretching out to the side

- Students swing right hand down to touch left toes/ankle
- Stand up and swing left hand down to touch right toes/ankle.
- Children can have straight legs or a slight bend in the knee
- Continue at varying speeds.

Handclapping-toe tapping

Students stand with feet shoulder width apart and arms out to the side.

- Cross the right foot in front of the left leg and top the toe to the ground. At the same time, cross the right arm over the body and clap with the left hand.
- Go back to the beginning stance.
- Cross the left foot in front of the right leg and tap the toe, at the same time bring the left arm across the body and clapping with the right hand,
- Repeat the sequence.

Head Shoulders Knees and Toes

Children can stand or sit facing the front.

- Children to cross their arms and bend elbows so their right hand is touching the left ear and left hand touches the right ear.
- Then uncross arms and out hands on shoulder
- Cross arms and touch their knees (right hand to left knee and left hand to right knee)
- Continue the pattern – vary the speeds, alternate crossed and uncrossed, change the order.
- Uncross arms and touch their toes.

Body Taps

Children can stand or sit facing the front

- Children cross the midline of their body while tapping the following body parts
- Right fingers to left ear, right hand to left shoulder, elbow, wrist, right elbow to left knee, right hand to left foot.
- Cross over left to right.
- Children can tap the same body part while alternating sides for a set time or set number of repetitions. (15 shoulder, elbow, wrist taps on each side)

Develop Spatial Awareness

Tree Pose

Children stand with feet shoulder width apart

- Place most of your weight on the right leg to start.
- Bend left leg into inner thigh of the right leg. (Can go to ankle or below the knee if children are struggling)
- Place palms together and lift arms in the air above their heads.
- Switch legs and repeat
- Children will get stronger at doing this and be able to hold the pose for longer.

Chair Balance

Children sit on the edge of their chairs. Make sure they have enough space to raise their legs without hitting anything.

- Wrap hands around the seat of the chair
- Lift body of the chair while slightly lowering body to the floor directly in front of the chair.
- Straighten one leg and lift it into the air.
- Hold the position for a set time. Slowly go back to the starting position and repeat switching legs

Arm Circle Hopping

Children to stand behind their chair facing forward.

- Hop up and down on their right leg.
- While hopping make arm circles with both arms circling forward and then backwards.
- Switch legs and repeat the task.

Jog plus wrist/elbow/shoulder tap

Children to stand and face forward.

- Children jog on the spot and reach arms out to the side.
- Using their right arm, reach across their bodies to touch their left wrist, elbow, shoulder. Keeping their arm straight out to the side.
- Continue jogging and repeat with the left arm reaching to the right wrist, elbow, shoulder.
- If children struggle to reach allow some bending in the elbow to reach wrist.

Supporting Exercise and Fitness in the Classroom

Supporting exercise and fitness in the classroom has a distinct purpose as it provides an opportunity for a brain break for the children. Physically fit children perform better academically. Exercise increases the blood flow and oxygen to the brain, which in turn wakes up the body and brain; enhancing the learning process.

To integrate exercise and fitness in the classroom it is important to know the health-related components which promote healthy living.

- **Cardio-respiratory endurance** – *allows heart, lungs and blood vessels to work together on whole body activities*
- **Muscular strength** – *amount of force muscles can exert at any given time*
- **Muscular endurance** – *ability of same muscles to work for an extended period before failing*
- **Flexibility** – *ability to move body parts and freely through wide range of motion.*

The activities are easy to implement for one to five-minute intervals during learning.

Cardio-respiratory endurance

Cross Lateral Hops

Children to stand and face forward

- Bring right elbow to their left knee while hopping once on their right foot
- Bring left elbow to their right knee while hopping once on their left foot
- Repeat the pattern

Criss Crosses

Children to stand with feet slightly more than shoulder width apart facing forward

- Jump while overlapping their feet – right foot in front, left foot behind.
- Jump back to feet shoulder width apart
- Jump together switching the feet – left foot in front, right foot behind.
- Repeat the pattern

Jump Twists

Children to stand with feet facing forward

- Jump and twist hips to the right
- Jump and go back to start position
- Jump and twist hips to the left
- Repeat the pattern – forward, right, forward, left

High Knees

Children stand facing forward, walking in place.

- Bring knees high toward their chest with each step.
- Increase speed

Muscular Strength and Endurance

Arm curls

Children to stand facing forward with arms at their sides

- Squeeze fists together
- Bend elbows to bring both of their arms to their shoulders
- Tighten the muscle in the upper arms and hold for three seconds
- Repeat for 5-10 reps

Front raise

Children to stand or sit facing forward with arms by their sides

- Squeeze fists
- Lift arms directly in front of them
- Tighten muscles in shoulders and arms
- Repeat for 5-10 reps

Chair Dips

Children to sit on the edge of their chair

- Wrap hands around the seat of the chair
- Lift their body off the chair and lower their body to floor in front of the chair.
- Keep knees bent and feet flat on the floor (if straighten their legs – becomes harder)
- When upper arm is parallel to the floor, straighten arms so holding their body above the seat of the chair
- Do not allow them to sit on the chair
- Repeat for 5 reps

Calf raises

Children stand facing forward with feet shoulder width apart

- Go up on toes and squeeze muscles in the back of the lower leg
- Hold for three seconds
- Repeat for 5 reps
- Point toes in or out to alter the challenge

Flexibility

Sides of neck

Children to sit or stand and have arms hang loosely by the side

- Tilt head sideways to the right hold for 5 seconds
- Tilt head sideways to the left and hold for 5 seconds
- NB: Ensure do this slowly to not hurt their necks
- Repeat 3-5 times per side

Chest back and shoulders

Children to sit or stand with arms loosely by their side

- In one movement children to lift their chest and raise arms slightly above shoulder level
- Squeeze shoulder blades together with elbows bent
- Hold for three seconds and return to starting position
- Repeat 3-5 times.

Front and Back of thigh

Children to stand facing forward with feet shoulder width apart

- Bring one knee up to their chest slowly
- Then lower leg back down
- Repeat with the other leg
- Repeat 5 times per leg.

How to make it fun in the classroom

Many will be motivated to engage in fitness and exercise while others will show resistance. Therefore, it is important to make it fun. Here are some strategies that could work for your class.

Be positive

- Be honest with the role that exercise plays in your life
- Demonstrate excitement and passion to inspire children

Add music

- Add upbeat music helps motivate children and makes it more enjoyable
- Allow children to choose music if possible

Set a personal challenge

- Set a goal for children e.g. how many jump twists can you complete in 30 seconds.
- Use time limits to complete a set workout

Make it a game

- **Fitness Freeze**
This is the same idea as musical statues, children exercise while the music is on and then freeze in a balance when it stops.
- **Balance challenge**
This can be linked to Fitness Freeze or as a stand alone game. Children try different balance poses – (1, 2 or 3 point balances). Could also incorporate Yoga poses if known. How long can they hold their balance for?

References

Lengel T & Kuczala M (2010); *The Kinaesthetic Classroom: Teaching and learning through Movement*, California, Sage Ltd