

## Secondary Classroom Physical Activities

Engaging secondary students in physical activity throughout the school day can be a challenge. Do not be afraid to try new activities to get the students moving. Here are some tips and lesson integration ideas that may be helpful for classroom teachers.

1. Start slowly and have patience. Be persistent about encouraging movement in class
2. Ask for student input on what they would like to do for physical activity (PA) breaks
3. Ask students to lead classroom PA breaks
4. Use appropriate music that appeals to teens to encourage movement
5. Create a voluntary PA program during lunch periods that could include Dance, Dance Revolution, Wii Fit, yoga, Pilates, Taebo or exercise videos
6. Integrate movement into your class content

### **Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up**

Strategy Description:

Use to organize students into groups, giving them an opportunity to stretch and move. Also use to review lesson content or to prompt collaboration.

1. Walk 10-15 steps (to get blood out of feet and seat-- this is the number of steps needed to get blood and oxygen to the brain).
2. Head up with a smile (the brain does not know a real smile/laugh from a fake one, this boosts serotonin and mood).
3. Partner shoulder to shoulder (this is less threatening than face-to-face).
4. Pick a characteristic to determine who goes first. Some examples: which person lives closer to \_\_\_\_, which person ate Mexican food most recently, etc.
5. Have them introduce themselves, share lesson content and reflect on what they learned. It is helpful to have a timer. Have each person share for a limited time and then switch to ensure no one is able to dominate the conversation and that all are learning.

NOTE: When you need groups of four have partners pair up. Partners put hands up and find another group of two.

ALTERNATIVE: Have students raise their hand up with a number of fingers and then they have to find a partner who has the same number of fingers up.



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### **Poker Reflection Activity**

Strategy Description:

A closure activity used to identify concrete learning concepts. Also use to reflect on feelings.

1. Different colored cards are put on tables for students.
2. Students write down one thing they learned during the lesson on one side of index card.
3. Students draw a face showing how they feel about the class, the concepts introduced or their learning.
4. Students place card, with face showing, on forehead and glance around the room at others. Think humor!
5. Leader initiates movement with music (ex. "I Feel Good") after giving directions to find a partner, and share what is on your card.
6. Students are asked to move around room for duration of song, sharing their key learning with several different partners.

### **Reflection Walk**

Strategy Description:

Use with students to incorporate movement, socialization and reflection during instruction.

1. Have students form small groups.
2. Explain that groups will be taking a walk together. On their walk, they should share something with the group about the current class content or review yesterday's content. You may determine the topic depending on the type of session you are leading. Some examples might be:
  - a. Share at least one thing you remember from class.
  - b. Share something new or interesting you learned this morning/afternoon.
  - c. You can also create a specific list of questions you want students to discuss.
3. Send them on a walking course outside (weather permitting) or throughout the building. Be specific about the return time and possibly have a song or signal to guide students back to their seats.
4. Upon returning to the session, allow 2-3 minutes for students to write down items they want to remember from their walk. Depending on your schedule, or the desired outcome, you can extend this by having students share with their table groups items they discussed outside of the group during the walk.



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### Different Colored Cards

Strategy Description:

Use to encourage movement and allow students to discuss or talk with others outside of their table group.

1. Prior to class, place a stack of index cards in the center of each table. Each table group is given a different color of cards.
2. At the point in the class when you want movement and discussion, pose a question or issue to the group. Ask students to write their thoughts on the index card. Allow 1-2 minutes for writing.
3. When given a signal, students are to stand, pair off with a person with a different colored card and share what they wrote.

### Lazy Eights

Strategy Description:

Use these strategies to get students up and out of their seats. Ideal for breaks after intense or mentally challenging activities.

1. Extend one arm in front of you with your thumb pointing upwards.
2. Trace the shape of a figure eight in the air. The eight should be on its side and as you trace it out in large, slow movements focus your eyes on your thumb. Without moving your head trace three eights in successively larger movements.
3. Now do it with your other hand and then clasp them together and do it with both hands

### Card Organizing

Strategy Description:

Use to mix students into groups, help stretch and move or prepare for a collaborative effort. Distribute playing cards 2-9 (by suit if possible) to each table. Place them face down.

1. Students each take a card and (without looking at the card) place it on their foreheads.
2. Now students are instructed to organize themselves without talking by number. This is easily accomplished, and the group is ready to hear the next instruction.

*Once the group has become a line, it is easy to subdivide the group by number or assign individual numbers with a role: "recorder" "timekeeper" etc.*



## Secondary Classroom Physical Activities

### Continuum

Strategy Description:

Use to integrate activity while having students process thoughts and level of agreement with various statements.

1. Place a graphic representation of a continuum along the wall of the classroom. Example:
  - a. Place pictorial or graphical representations such as a penguin, emu or roadrunner along the wall such that they correspond to participants' comfort levels with the statements.
  - b. You may also use signs that say, "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree."
2. Explain what the continuum represents.
3. Ask participants to move to the spot on the continuum that best matches their level of agreement.
  - a. Example of lesson content:
    - i. Local waterways need to be protected.
    - ii. A variety of wildlife should be encouraged.
    - iii. People should be involved in local environment care.
    - iv. Only ratepayers should contribute to the cost of caring for the waterways.
    - v. United States citizens care for the environment.
    - vi. It is better to use an unspoiled river for recreation, rather than keep it as a natural habitat.
    - vii. People should be made to spend some of their free time working towards helping the environment
4. Have students discuss why they selected their spots along the continuum.
5. Use this to differentiate a group for pacing on a topic.

*-These ideas have been adapted from brain-based learning strategies and are meant to encourage mild physical activity during core content classes.*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services new [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends one hour or more of moderate or vigorous aerobic physical activity a day for teens, including vigorous intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week. Both groups should do muscle-strengthening activities (which might include sit-ups or rope-climbing) 3 days a week, and bone-building exercise (running, jumping) also 3 days a week.