



Tools and Ideas for Engaging Students Through Active Learning

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Springboard to Active Schools is an initiative of the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and Health Resources in Action (HRIA) through Cooperative Agreement CDC-RFA-DP16-1601 with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Special Thanks

National Collaboration to Promote Health, Wellness, and Academic Success of School-Age Children

Cooperative Agreement CDC-RFA-DP16-1601 with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

[CDC Healthy Schools](#)

[CDC COVID-19 - Schools](#)



Welcome and Introductions



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Touch Blue

Ask students to touch something with a certain attribute (e.g., "touch blue" - and students touch something blue in their setting). Other ideas: "touch something cold," or "touch something that makes you happy." Students can move around their space and off screen, but they should be able to hear the next instruction. Wait 10 seconds between instructions so the game moves quickly. If a participant cannot find an item during any of the rounds, provide them with an alternative physical activity (e.g., march in place, stretch, high knees, etc.).



TIP: Tie in concepts from lessons being taught (e.g., science – touch something recyclable). Then, have students debrief what they touched.



Technology Overview

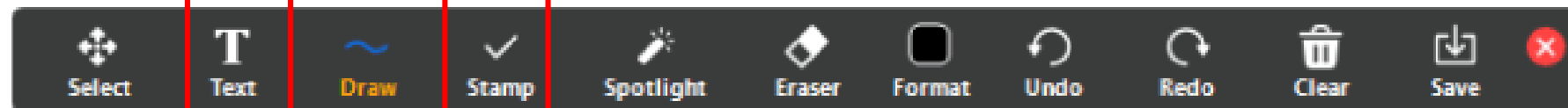
The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface. At the top, a green status bar indicates "You are viewing Brittany Chen's screen". To the right of this bar is a "View Options" dropdown menu, which is open and shows options: "Zoom Ratio", "Fit to Window", "Request Remote Control", "Annotate" (highlighted with a red box), "Exit Full Screen", and "Side-by-side Mode" (checked). Further right are buttons for "Speaker View" and "Exit Full Screen". The main area shows a presentation slide titled "Creating a Culture of Physical Activity in Your Context" with the subtitle "A CSPAP Working Session". The slide features the "Springboard to Active Schools" logo and logos for the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and Health Resources in Action. At the bottom of the slide, it says "March 31, 2020" and provides information about the initiative. On the right side of the interface, there are two video thumbnails: one labeled "Another participant" and another labeled "You" (highlighted with a yellow box). At the bottom of the screen is a toolbar with icons for "Mute", "Stop Video", "Invite", "Participants" (showing 2), "Share", "Chat" (highlighted with a red box), "Record", and a "Leave Meeting" button.



Annotation Overview

Zoom

🔍 ID: 514-384-1012 00:01:21 🔒 Stop Share



Opening Question

What were some ways you were physically active while you were in school?



Building a Culture of Physical Activity



Active learners =
healthy youth

Active Students = Better Learners

www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/PEandPA



Today's Objectives





1. Learn about the benefits of classroom physical activity
2. Explore considerations for incorporating physical activity
3. Practice activity ideas and ways to adapt activities
4. Explore new resources



Considerations for Classroom Physical Activity

Four Key Considerations





Considerations for classroom physical activity during COVID-19

Physical activity should be integrated into classroom instruction, whether the classroom is virtual or in-person, while physically distanced. The link between academics and health has become even more apparent during COVID-19.^{1,2} As schools determine how they will reopen, it is important that schools continue to provide opportunities for students to be physically active throughout the school day, regardless of the instruction format.

Physical Activity during the school day promotes:

- **Physical health and wellness** by increasing the amount of time students are active and limiting the amount of time they are sitting;
- **Academic performance** by improving concentration, on-task behaviors, and test scores; and
- **Social emotional health** by increasing motivation and enjoyment of learning, reducing stress, anxiety, and social isolation brought on by COVID-19, and decreasing behavioral problems.

Classroom physical activity is one strategic approach to promote active learning and support students in achieving the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day.

This document provides district and school administrators, teachers, and caregivers and families with practical ideas to safely and equitably incorporate classroom physical activity to promote a culture of active engagement and learning.

¹ Loades et al. Rapid systematic review: The impact of social isolation and loneliness on the mental health of children and adolescents in the context of COVID-19. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psych.* 2020; preprint.

² Dorn E, Hancock B, Sarakatsannis J, Viruleg E. COVID-19 and student learning in the United States; the hurt could last a lifetime. Retrieved July 4, 2020.

1. Create a culture of physical activity
2. Ensure approaches are equitable and inclusive
3. Adhere to health and safety protocols
4. Follow national guidance



Poll

- What is the current instructional setting you're in or supporting?
 - In-person only
 - Virtual only
 - Hybrid
 - All of the above



Create a culture of physical activity



- Establishing classroom norms or behavioral agreements
- Identifying regular intervals of classroom physical activity
- Offering opportunities to connect through physical activity



Ensure approaches are equitable and inclusive

- Who is in my class?
- Where are my students learning from?
- What kind of activities should I choose?
- How can I maximize participation?



Adhere to health and safety protocols

- Classroom physical activity selection
- Space considerations
- Other health and hygiene measures



STRATEGIES FOR Classroom Physical Activity in Schools

Build Buy-in and Provide Training for Classroom Physical Activity

1. Identify who to engage and how to involve them in planning for classroom physical activity.
2. Identify what classroom physical activity policies and practices currently exist.
3. Provide professional development or in-service training on classroom physical activity.

Create Classroom Environments Supportive of Physical Activity

4. Identify approaches to incorporate classroom physical activity.
5. Identify opportunities and appropriate times for classroom physical activity.
6. Identify materials, technology, and resources to promote classroom physical activity.
7. Identify ways to create and use classroom space for classroom physical activity.
8. Ensure that classroom physical activity is appropriate and safe for all students by setting and communicating safety and behavioral expectations

Collect and Share Information About Classroom Physical Activity Experiences

9. Collect information on classroom physical activity.
10. Share successes, challenges, and lessons learned from classroom physical activity.

Follow
national
guidance



Check In: How are you doing?

Creating a culture of physical activity

Ensuring approaches are equitable and inclusive

Adhering to health and safety protocols

Following national guidance



Practical Ideas and Tips

Overview

- **Simple and easy** physical activity ideas
- Require **little to no preparation** and **no equipment**
- **Adaptable** to different ages, abilities, and learning settings



CLASSROOM PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IDEAS AND TIPS

There are many names for classroom physical activity — brain boosters, energizers, movement integration, active learning. Regardless of what it is called, the end goal is the same: to get students out of their seat and moving throughout the school day.

Classroom physical activity can be quick 1-5 minute bursts of movement that leave students more focused and ready to learn. Educators can plan physical activities in advance (e.g., have it scheduled into the day's class and/or integrated into the lesson to teach academic concepts) or use it as a classroom management tool (e.g., when they notice the class is getting restless and need a boost in energy).

In the times of COVID-19, it is more important than ever to support children in their mental, social, and physical health. Students may feel stressed, fatigued, unmotivated, and socially isolated due to the COVID-19 safety precautions at school or virtual learning at home. And, students are at risk of being increasingly sedentary during these times. Classroom physical activity is an important approach to safely and effectively mitigate some of these challenges.

In this document, there are sheets of simple and easy physical activity ideas that require very little preparation and no equipment. These activities can be done with students standing next to their desk and many are adaptable to different ages, abilities, and settings. Modify activities to better suit your unique class.

Print and cut activity cards for easy access and share them with students to do at home as well. Each activity card is labeled with an icon to indicate the suggested age group, learning setting, and type of physical activity. Although the activities are labeled, we hope they spark some inspiration for other activities and encourage educators to be creative and adapt activities for different grade levels and learning settings.

General Tips

- Model healthy behavior
- Communicate with parents and caregivers
- Ask students to share their physical activity ideas
- Use classroom physical activity as an opportunity to build community



Mix and Match

- Example movements for physical activity breaks and common stretches

List of movements for physical activity breaks

- Side shuffle
- Vertical jumps
- Jump side-to-side
- Run in place
- Squat jump
- High knees
- Jumping jacks
- Skip
- Front & back strokes
- Forward & backwards arm circles
- Standing opposite elbow-to-knee



HELPFUL TIP:

Engage your school's physical education teacher to model the correct form and how to safely do a list of stretches and physical activities, either in-person or virtually, early and/or throughout the school year.







Print and Cut Cards

Scavenger Hunt

Give students a list of items to retrieve from their home and a time limit to retrieve them so they move as quickly as possible (e.g., 15 items in 5 minutes). Ideas might include something red, something you wear on your head, something that brings you joy, etc. After time is up, go down the list and ask students show what they found on screen.

TIP: You can tie in a few items for the next part of your lesson (e.g., math — something that measures volume; geography — an object that tells a story about a place; literature — a book by a favorite author).


This activity can also be done in-person if it is conducted outdoors.




ALL    

5-minute Dance Party

Create a playlist and get students to do a different movement every time you change songs.

TIP: Use digital content designed to promote classroom physical activity, such as [Hip Hop Public Health](#) and [GoNoodle](#). Let students choose the songs, a video, and the movements.



ES   




Crazy 8's

Choose four different exercises and ask students to do each eight times.

Examples of exercises:

- 8 jumping jacks
- 8 silly shakes (just shake as silly as you can)
- 8 high knees
- 8 punches
- 8 lunges


TIP: Include both upper and lower body movements.



ALL   

Getting to Know You

Ask students to stand up. One by one, each student introduces themselves with their name and favorite physical activity, acting out the activity. The class says hello to the student in response, and also acts out the physical activity.





VARIATION: Ask students to stand up and do some kind of movement if something applies to them (e.g., Stand up and do arm circles if your birthday is in the month of December).





ALL   

ICON LEGEND



AGE RANGES

 All ages	 Elementary school	 Middle school	 High school
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CLASSROOM SETTINGS

 In-person activity	 Virtual activity
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ACTIVITY TYPE

 Physical activity break	 Physical activity integrated into lessons
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Scavenger Hunt

Topic: Getting to know you

- Find 1 item that represents one of your personal interests, hobbies, or favorite activities



Vote with Your Feet

Post around the classroom signs that say: yes, no, true, false, agree, and disagree.

Depending on the day's lesson, ask students to answer questions by going to stand by the sign that best reflects their answer. If applicable, ask students to elaborate their answers. Be sure to remind students to stand at least 6 feet apart.



TIP: If there is space in the classroom, ask students to actively move (e.g., hop, skip, etc.) to their answer choice.

Alternatively, instead of signs around the classroom, use movement to indicate the response. For example, do arm circles if you think A; stretch overhead if you think B; give yourself a big hug if you think C).

Vote with Your Feet

Topic: Physical Activity

To answer Yes, stretch your arms up and wiggle fingers

To answer No, crisscross your arms over and under each other



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(just shake as silly as you can)
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Crazy 8's

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Ready, Set, Go!



Large group reflection

- How could you modify the activities for different age groups, subjects, and abilities?
- How can you use these activity cards in your work?
- What would you like additional training on?



Thank you! Connect with us

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