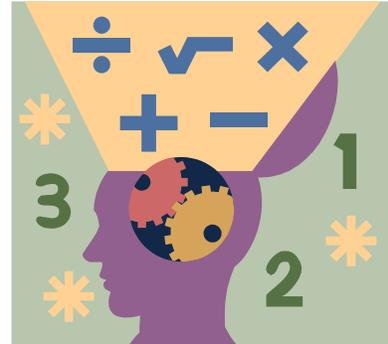
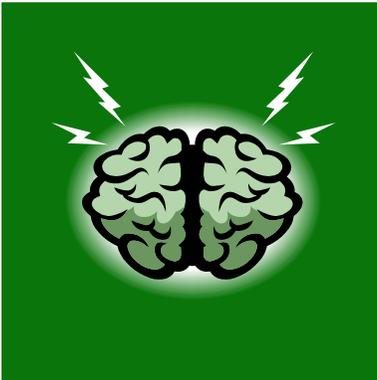


BRAIN BREAKS WORK!!



Did you know a 1-2 minute brain break gives the hippocampus a break to allow information to be stored in long term memory?

Brain research shows that the use of brain breaks increases long term memory and engagement in learning.

1. **5-4-3-2-1.** In this simple game, students stand up and the teacher (or leader) has them do five different movements in descending order. For example the teacher would say: "Do five jumping jacks, spin around four times, hop on one foot three times, walk all the way around the classroom two times, give your neighbor one high-five (pausing in between each task for students to do it).
2. **Trading Places** Have students stand behind their pushed-in chairs. Call out a trait and everyone who has that trait must change places with someone else (students who do not have the trait stay where they are). Examples: "Everyone with curly hair." "Everyone who ate cereal for breakfast." "Everyone who is wearing stripes."
3. **Six Spots** Number six spots around your room from 1-6. Have students each go to a spot of their choice. Choose a student to roll a die (if you can make a big one out of foam, it adds to the fun). All the students at the number rolled must go back to their seats. Students that are left go to a new spot and the die is rolled again. Continue until only a few students are left.
4. **Mingle, Mingle, Group!** In this game students mill about the classroom saying, "mingle, mingle, mingle" in soft voices until the teacher says "Groups of 5," at which point the students must quickly group themselves into groups with the correct number of people. Students who are left over must do three jumping jacks before the next round starts. The teacher can call out any number for the

group size. You can also add rules such as: as soon as a group is complete, all members must sit down in a line.

5. **Dance Party!** Put on some rockin' music and dance! If you can make the room semi-dark and have a black light or other special effect, your kids will love it!
6. **Freeze Dance!** Similar to Dance Party except that every so often the music stops and students must freeze and hold the position they are in until the music begins again.
7. **Name Moves** Students stand behind their chairs. In turn, each student says his or her name accompanied by a special movement. For example a student might say, "Kayla!" while dramatically dropping to one knee and doing Jazz Hands. After the student does his or her move, the rest of the class says the students name in unison and imitates the move. Then it is the next student's turn.
8. **Keep it Up:** Students must keep a beach ball from hitting the ground. Add two or three balls to make it even more fun.
9. **Simon Says** An oldie but a goody!
10. **Movement Songs** Sing a song with whole-body movements such as, Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes, Father Abraham, Toe-Knee Chest-Nut, Shake Your Sillies Out (Raffie), Grand Old Duke of York, My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean etc.
11. **Recorded Movement Songs** Older students might enjoy a simple Zumba routine, YMCA, or the Macarena. Littler ones will love [Sesame Street's A Very Simple Dance to Do](#).
12. **Animal Pretend** Younger children will enjoy pretending to be various animals (or even objects such as lawn mowers or airplanes). Call out a few in sequence.
13. **Would You Rather** Ask a would you rather question and have students show their choice by moving to one end of the room or the other. Have a few kids share why. Here are [20 free Would You Rather Questions](#) to get you started.
14. **Find it Fast** Call out a color or other trait (something round, something made of wood), and students must find an object in the room that fits the trait and get to it quickly.
15. **Physical Challenges** Challenge students to do something physically difficult such as standing on one foot with arms extended or this one: grab your nose with left hand and grab your left earlobe with your right hand, then quickly switch so that your right hand is on your nose and your left hand is grabbing your right earlobe. Yoga poses could also be a good variation.
16. **Plates** Give each student a paper plate. Students must walk around the room balancing the plates on their heads. If a student drops his or her plate, the student must freeze until another student picks it up and places it back on the student's head (while keep his or her own plate in place, of course).
17. **Line Up!** Have students line up using a specific criteria such as age (use day and month, not just year), height, alphabetically by middle name, hair length, etc.
18. **Limbo** All you need is a long stick and a pair of kids to hold it. Music is nice too.
19. **Human Knot** Divide students into groups of about eight students. Have students each grab right hands with someone who is not directly next to them. Then do the same with left hands. The challenge is to untangle and become a circle without releasing hands.
20. **Jump Skip Counting** Have students count by twos, fives, tens etc. while jumping with each count. You could also practice spelling words this way.

Please note that I did not come up with all of these out of my own head. Here are some of the sources I used:

- Michigan Department of Education: [Brain Breaks](#) (great resource!)
- Pro Teacher: [Quick Brain Breaks](#)
- I Want to Teach Forever: [Teachers Share Their Best Brain Breaks and Contest Winners](#)

Here is a [nine-minute video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMvycnRNIZo&feature=related) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMvycnRNIZo&feature=related> about how to manage Brain Breaks in your classroom. Good ideas on how to quickly transition and group students. Try searching Brain Breaks on YouTube for ideas and dance routines you can use with your students.