

Movement Breaks in the Classroom

A Resource for Post-Primary Schools



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This resource book was developed by Senior Occupational Therapists working with the National Council for Special Education and the NCSE 'Occupation Therapy Support Service for Schools Project' based at the University of Limerick.

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Section 1: Introduction

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on schools in this academic year. Schools have responded by adapting and changing how they operate. This resource and the accompanying video aim to aid teachers and schools to support learning and engagement in the classroom.

The 'COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Post Primary Schools', outlines that maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is a key control for minimising the risk of introduction and spread of COVID-19. These new measures mean students will spend a large portion of the school day in a classroom with reduced opportunities for movement.

This resource provides a guide for teachers on introducing planned movement into classrooms. It is recognised that schools are under a lot of pressure at this time, and we would like to encourage teachers to try some of the movement suggestions in this guide and identify what works for them and their students.

Movement plays an important role in the classroom. Movement underpins the development of gross and fine motor skills, physical fitness, language and communication, self-esteem, confidence and learning (Erwin, et al. 2012; Macvior et al., 2019). Incorporating movement into the classroom can support students to:

- Maintain concentration and attention (Hoza et al., 2015).
- Regulate energy levels (Mac Cobb, Fitzgerald & O'Keeffe, 2014).
- Expand their toolkit of self-regulation strategies (Shanker, 2013).

The National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS) [wellbeing toolkit for post primary schools](#) recommends school staff empower students by teaching them to identify a range of tools and strategies that they can use to self-regulate in the classroom. (For full access to these resources see www.gov.ie/backtoschool). This resource will provide teachers with some tools and strategies to support self-regulation through introducing planned movement into teaching and learning.

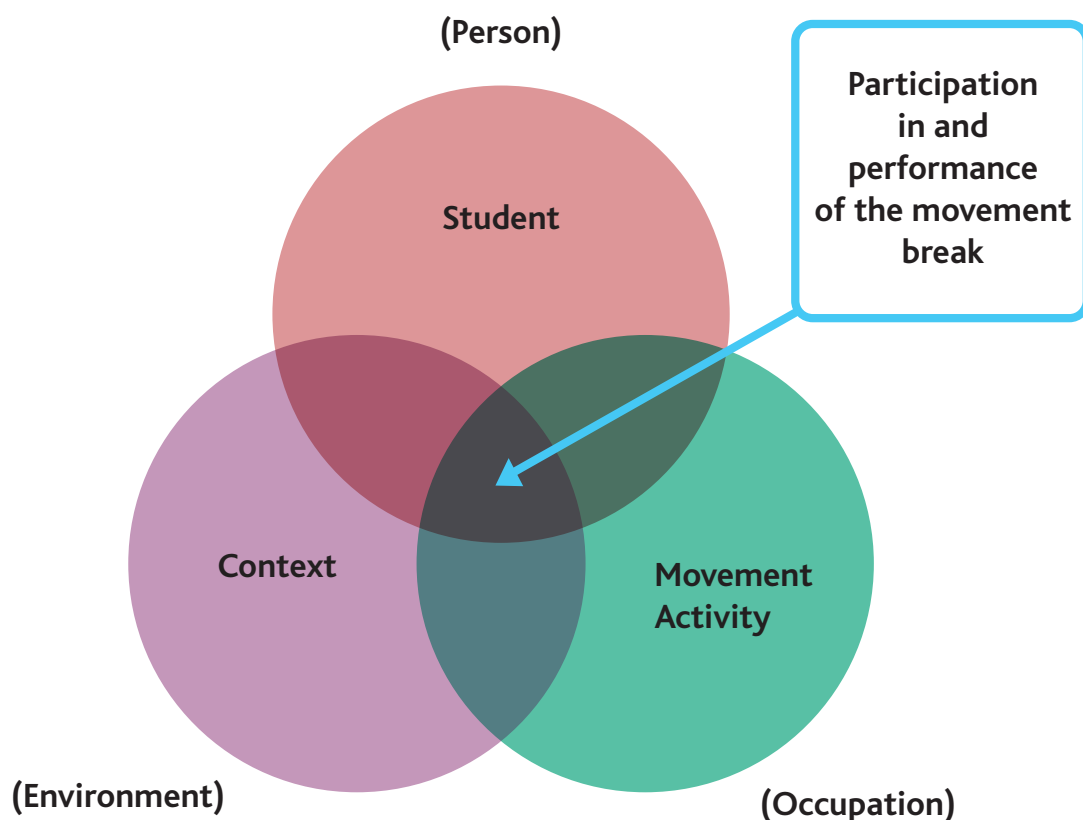
Disclaimer

All movement breaks should be carried out under the close supervision of a teacher. The teacher is responsible for ensuring that movement breaks are implemented safely and in line with COVID-19 public health guidelines for schools.

It is important that the teacher is aware of the student's ability levels and any injuries so that movements selected are appropriate and accessible for all. The teacher is responsible for carrying out an assessment of risk prior to using movements in the classroom. Where relevant, it is advised to consult with a student's medical professional teams prior to engaging in these activities.

Section 2: What Do I Need To Consider In Choosing The Right Movement Break?




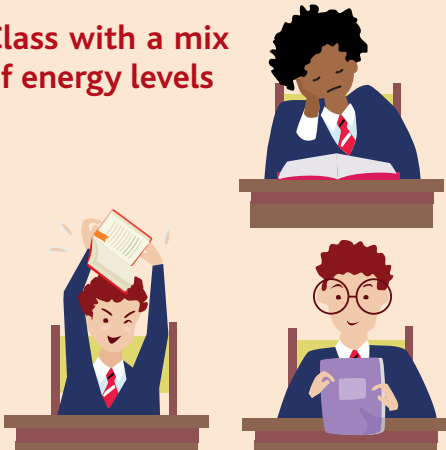
There are a number of factors we need to consider in order to choose an appropriate movement break that students will be able to participate in safely and successfully. We need to think about the student (Person), the context of the classroom (Environment) and the demands of the movement activity (Occupation).



based on The Person Environment Occupation Model of Practice
(Law et al, 1996).

Student Factors

- a) **Student Year Group.** You may need to tailor how you incorporate movement so that it is appealing to the relevant age group you are working with.
- b) **Student Energy Levels.** Determining student energy levels will allow you to decide if you need to use energising movements, calming/organising movements or a combination of both. Consider the visual on Page 4 to help you identify the energy levels within your class.'

| What energy state are the students in? | Signs to look out for | Type of movement recommended to support regulation |
|---|---|---|
| High energy  | Moving in their seats, fidgety, loud, noisy, restless, over active, off task, disruptive, hyperactive. | Calming/organising activities. |
| Just right energy  | Just enough energy, relaxed and alert, able to focus, sitting upright, paying attention, listening, looking at teacher/board, learning. | Movement breaks benefit even those who already appear to be in a calm alert state. Movement can benefit these students by enabling them to remain in that state for longer. |
| Low energy  | Sluggish, sleepy, yawning, zoning out, slouched posture, quiet, hard to get engaged. | Alerting activities. |
| Class with a mix of energy levels  | Some students have low energy, some just right energy and some high energy. | Follow a particular sequence of movement activities. Start with a short alerting activity and follow with a calming/organising activity. This helps everyone to finish in a calm alert state. |

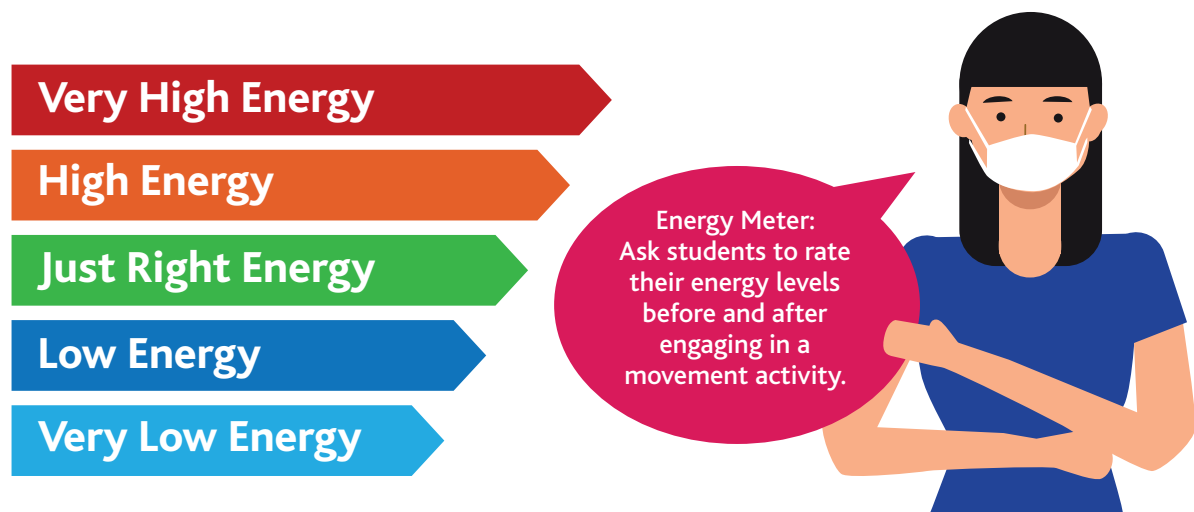
Adapted from the *Demonstration Project on In-School and Early Years Therapy Support (2019)*. *Movement break ideas for post-primary schools booklet*.

Movements that are fast, less predictable and have a quick tempo are generally **alerting**.

Movements that are slow, steady and use muscles for heavy work are generally **calming** and **organising**.

If levels of alertness vary within your class, **start with short alerting movements and end on calming/organising movements** to support students to be optimally regulated for the transition back to learning (Ayres, 1998; Horwood, 2009; Wilbarger, 1995). Examples of alerting movements and calming/organising movements will be provided in the following sections.

It can take time to **tune into the different energy levels** of your students. Encourage students to notice how their body feels, before and after engaging in different movement activities. This can support students to develop awareness of their energy levels. Students may find it supportive to use a visual 'energy meter', such as the one below, to identify and communicate their energy levels (Kuypers, 2011; Williams & Shellenberger, 1996).



c) Students' Abilities and Strengths

Some students may need additional supports or adaptations to engage in movement breaks. Please consider the following:

- **Students' physical abilities** (where relevant, it is advisable to consult with students' medical and/or therapy teams prior to engaging in any movement activities).
- **Students' communication and learning needs.** Clear instructions (verbal and/or written) on how to complete movements safely help all students understand what they need to do. Some students may need additional supports. We need to consider the language load of these tasks and tailor our instructions to ensure all students understand and can follow them (for example the demands of listening to a set of instructions, processing them and following/responding can be challenging for students with Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). Consider how verbal prompting, physical demonstrations and visual supports (images/words/symbols) can support and reinforce student understanding. Some students may benefit from a visual outline of the steps of the movement; others may benefit from the support of a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) to complete the movement.

- **Students Sensory Needs:** Some students experience difference in how they respond to sensory information, students may be over responsive and/or under responsive. When choosing movements, be mindful of students' sensory needs. It is important that the student feels safe and comfortable to participate in the movements selected. If a student has an assessment report detailing their sensory profile, please refer to that report for detailed information and/or recommendations.
- **Students' confidence:** Some students may be less comfortable or have less confidence, when engaging in movement. Create a safe environment where the focus is on moving our bodies to stay alert and not about 'moving perfectly'. Encourage students to do what they can and what they are comfortable with.

d) Student Interests

Incorporating student interests into movement breaks can help motivate students and maximise participation. Consider:

- Using language relevant to student hobbies and interests to describe movement breaks. Including a 'challenge' or 'game' element.
- Involving students in the design and selection of movement ideas.
- Providing students with roles (e.g. time keeper, rep counter, demonstrator, etc.).
- Provide students with a choice (e.g. would X or Y be more helpful for you to do?)

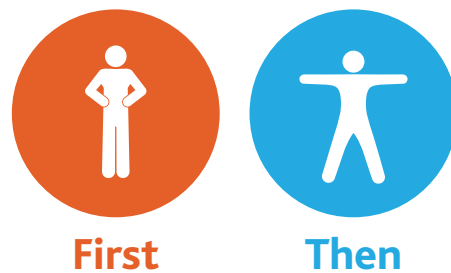
Contextual Factors

- a) How much **space** is available for students to complete the movements?
- b) Students need to be able to participate in movements safely and in line with your schools' **COVID-19 regulations**.
- c) How much **time** do you have available to complete the movement break? Short movement breaks, even just 2-3 minutes, can be beneficial in supporting students to maintain focus and attention in the classroom.
- d) Do you need any **resources** to do the movement? A wall, desk, chair, timer?
- e) It is important to select movements you as the **teacher feel safe and comfortable** to engage in. You may like to incorporate movements you have experience of doing and have an interest in.

Section 3: What Movement Activities Can I Incorporate Into My Classroom?

It is important for students and teachers to pay attention to their bodies when participating in movement activities and to stop if they feel uncomfortable at any point. We are aware that in these current times, wearing masks when completing movement activities can be more challenging. We encourage teachers and students to go at their own pace and participate safely.

When introducing new movements to your class it is important to model the movement steps clearly, using visual cues and communication supports as appropriate. The types of supports you use will depend on the needs of students in your classroom but examples could include: Visual Schedules, First-Then Boards or Choice Boards. Here is an example of a First-Then board to visually support jumping jacks.



Decide on the number of repetitions and the **amount of time** you want to allocate to each exercise in your movement sequence. As per the *Return to School Guidance for Practical Subjects in Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education*, it is important to be mindful that with more vigorous exercise the area of spread of respiratory droplets is greater. It is therefore important to consider the amount of time spent doing a movement, repetitions completed and the sequence of movements. Movement breaks don't have to be lengthy. Short regular bursts of movement can be effective for regulating energy.

If **levels of alertness vary within your class**, it can be helpful to **start with short alerting movements** and **end on a calming/organising movement** to support students to be optimally regulated for the transition back to learning. Observe your students' responses to movement and seek student feedback to identify how different movements impact your class groups' energy levels.



This section outlines different movement activities that can be completed in a seated or standing position in any classroom.

Movement activities are divided into

- a) Alerting Movements (Seated)
- b) Alerting Movements (Standing)
- c) Calming/Organising Movements (Seated and Standing)

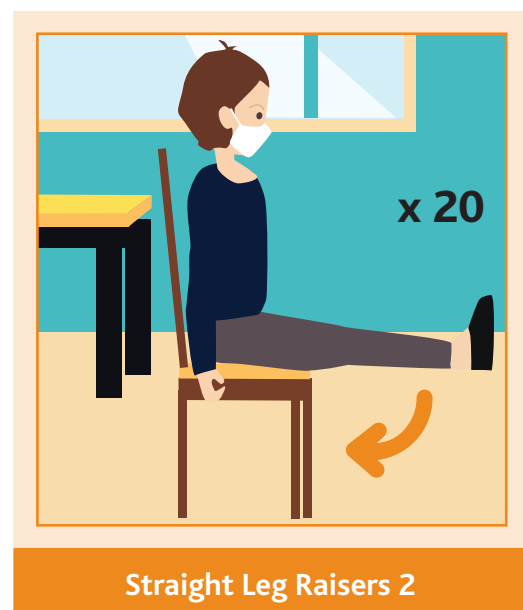
a) Alerting Movements (Seated)

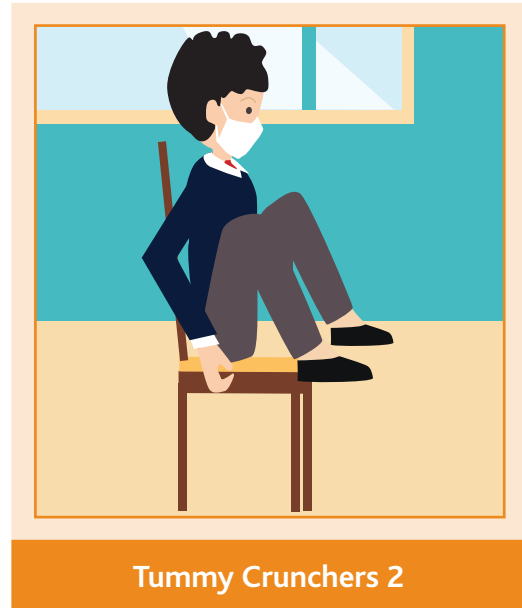
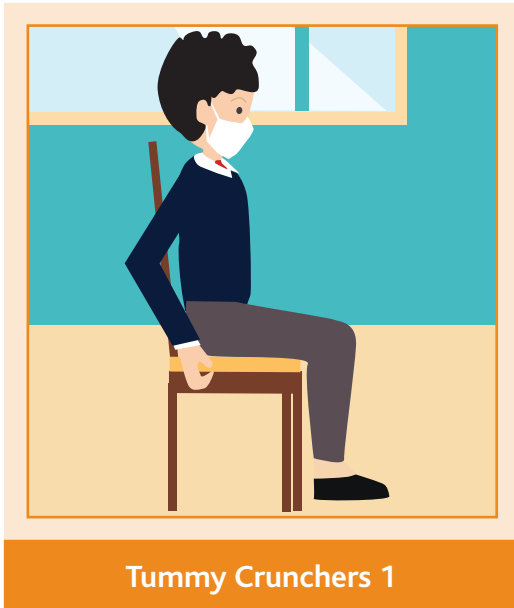
The following are instructions for leading alerting movements in the classroom that are completed in a seated position. The movements below provide general recommendations on the amount of time to spend doing a movement and the number of repetitions to complete. However, as per guidance in section 2 and 3, it is advised that teachers should be mindful of the space available, individual students' needs and the COVID-19 school guidelines and guidance when choosing a movement to use.

Chair Aerobics

Ask students to pull their chairs out from their desk and sit up straight. Talk students through the following movements, modelling the movement to support understanding.

- i) **Straight Leg Raisers:** Keep your ankles together and extend your legs to a 180-degree angle (until they are straight). Then lower back down. Continue for 20 repetitions.
- ii) **Squats:** Sit up straight, put your hands behind your ears, feet flat on the floor and lean your weight on your heels. Try keep your back straight but not rigid. Looking straight ahead can help. On a slow count of 1-5, stand up, then lower back down again to another slow count of 1-5. Continue for 5 repetitions.
- iii) **Tummy Crunchers:** Sit with your weight towards the front of the seat and your arms behind you, holding on to the back of the seat. Then bring both knees up together towards the chest.
- iv) **Punching Arms:** This can be done seated or standing. Using two hands punch the air in front of you for 1-3 minutes at any speed. It is important to ensure there is enough clear space in front of students. If standing, keep knees slightly bent and centre the core to maintain balance.

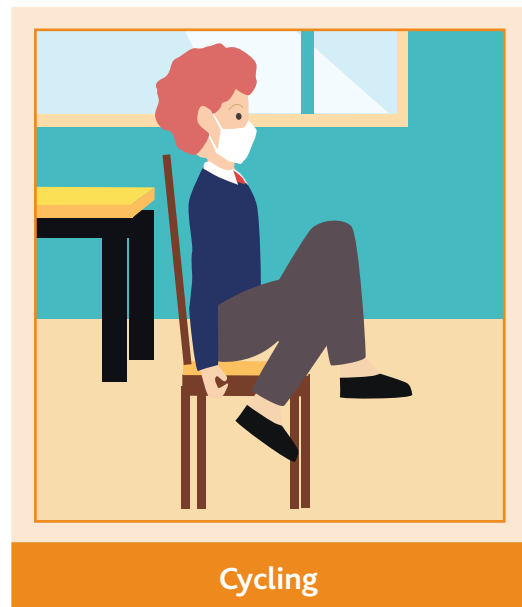




Chair Sports (adapted from Drew & Atter, 2009)

Have the students sit on the edge of their chairs while keeping their back straight. Option to play music with a strong beat and talk students through the following actions.

- i) **Swimming:** Move your arms as if doing the front or back crawl and kick your legs in front of you with toes pointed.
- ii) **Cycling:** Hold on to the seat of your chair and pedal your legs as if riding a bike.
- iii) **Paddling:** Use an imaginary paddle to paddle a canoe (both sides).



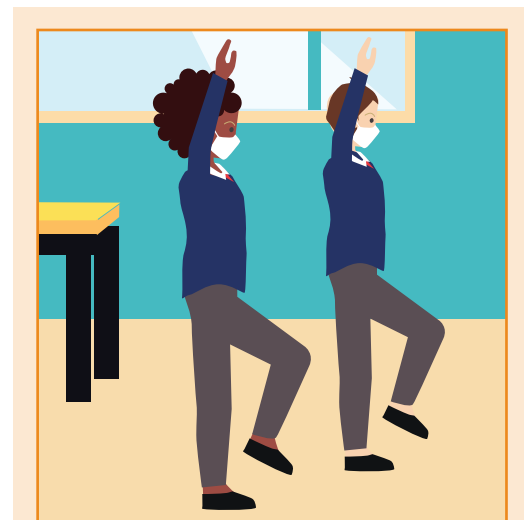
b) Alerting Movements (Standing)

The following are instructions for leading alerting movements in the classroom that are completed in a standing position. Adaptations are given where these movements can be completed in a seated position if necessary. The movements below provide general recommendations on the amount of time to spend doing a movement and the number of repetitions to complete. However, as per guidance in section 2 and 3, it is advised that teachers should be mindful of the space available, individual students' needs and the COVID-19 school guidelines and guidance when choosing a movement to use.

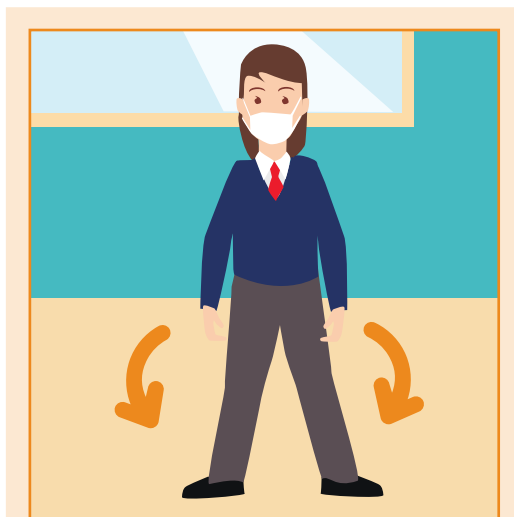
Marching On The Spot: March on the spot in seated or standing. Lift your knees up high one at a time and raise the opposite arm into the air. Lower your leg and arm together. Aim to complete the movement slowly whilst maintaining balance.

Jog On The Spot: Increase your speed and transition from a march to a jog on the spot.

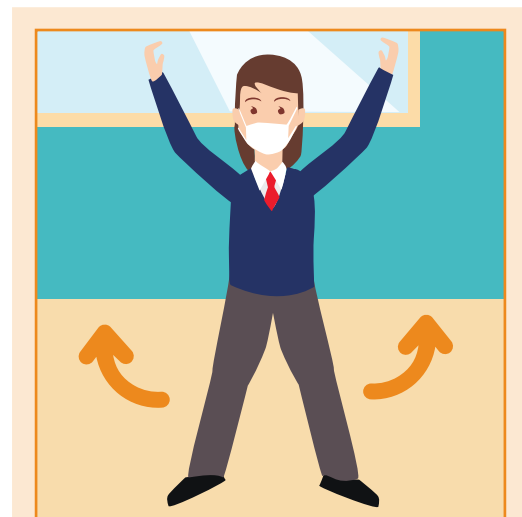
High Knees: Stand or sit with feet hip width apart. Lift up your right knee as high as it will go and raise your left arm in the air, then switch quickly so that the left knee and right hand are up before right foot and left hand are down. This is a quick movement. Continue the exercise for as long as needed.



Marching On The Spot

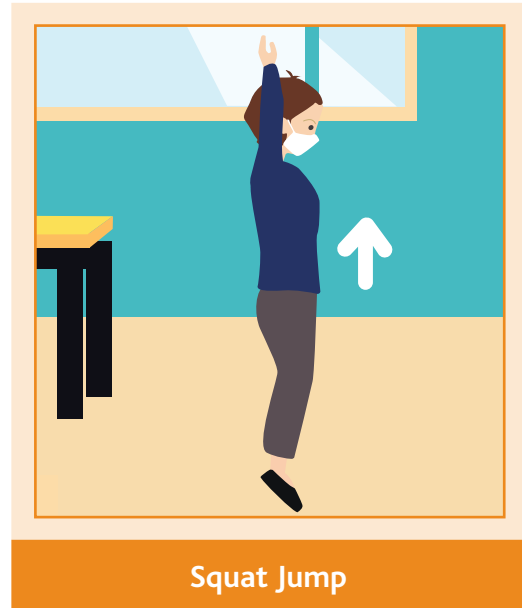
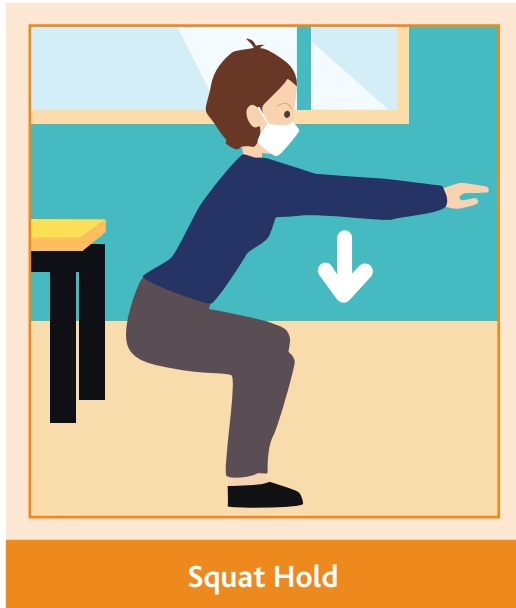


Jumping Jacks 1



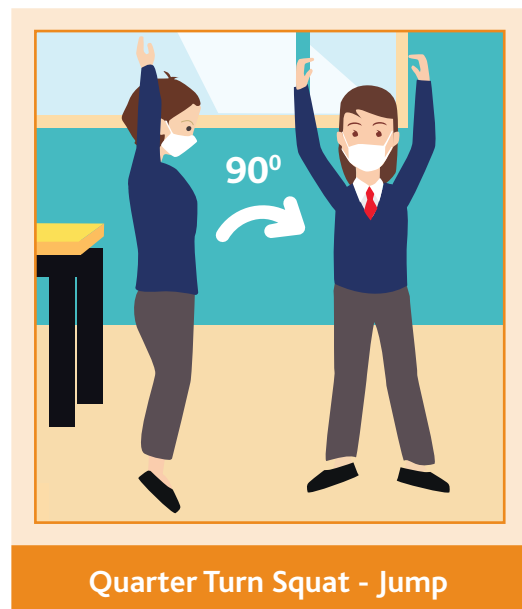
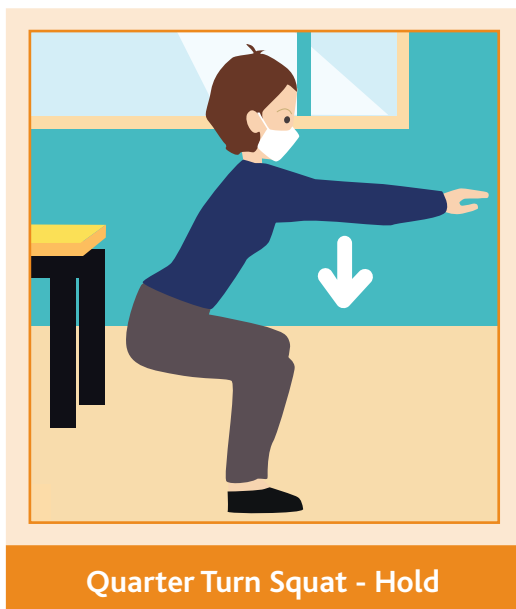
Jumping Jacks 2

Jumping Jacks or Half Jacks: Stand with your feet hip width apart and arms by your side. Jump by moving your legs to the side and stretching your arms out like a star fish. Jump back into starting position (legs centred and arms by your side). Another option is to complete the exercise without the arms which is called a half jack.

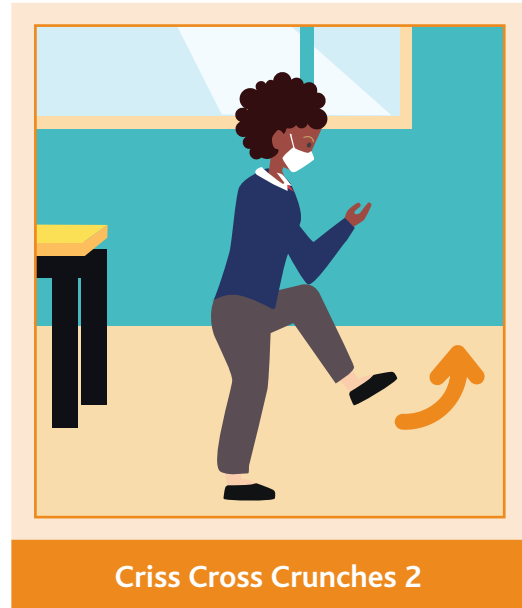
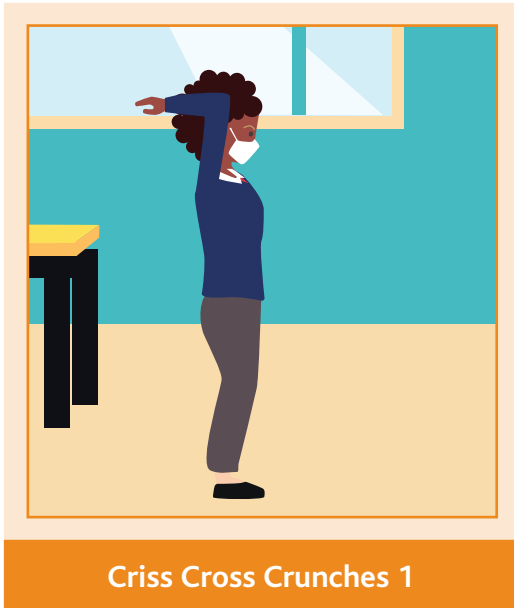


Squat Hold: Stand with feet hip width apart and lower into a squat position by bending your knees. Keeping your spine straight, chest lifted and your knees behind your toes. Hold this position for 30 - 60 seconds. It can be helpful to have your arms out in front of your chest for balance.

Squat Jump: Ask students to first lower into a squat position. Then from there, jump straight up and swing your arms overhead. Return to squat. Repeat for 30 seconds.

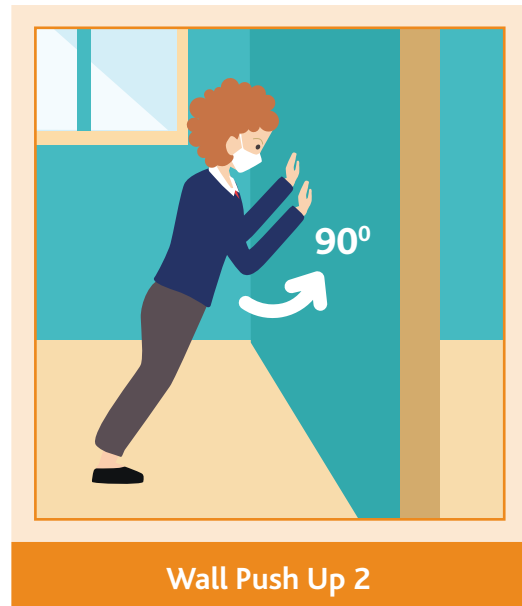


Quarter Turn Squat Jumps: Ask students to first lower into a squat position. From there, using your arms and legs to jump up and turn 90 degrees to the left. Land softly with your knees bent and return to the squat position. Repeat and continue to turn 90 degrees until you face the front again.

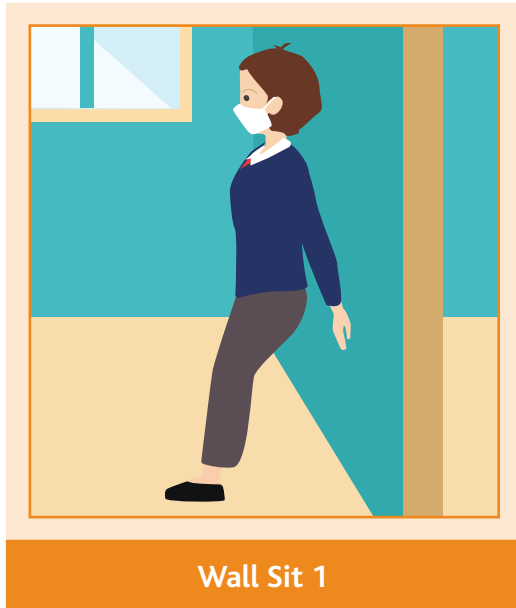


Criss Cross Crunches: Stand with feet hip width apart and hands behind your head. Twist your body by, bringing your left elbow down and across the body. Raise the right knee up and across to meet the left elbow. Repeat with the right elbow and knee for 15-20 repetitions.

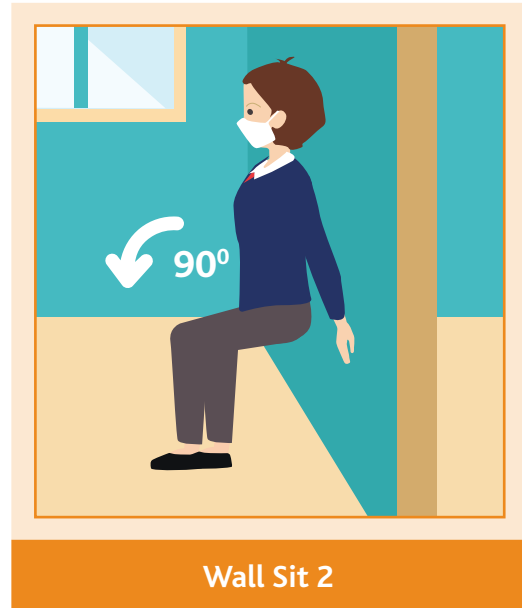
Hops / Air Skip: Hop on one leg and switch sides or complete two legged jumps pretending you have a skipping rope.



Wall Push Up: Stand facing a clear wall, arm's length from the wall. Extend your arms out to measure the correct distance. Place both hands against the wall. Slowly lower your chest towards the wall bending your elbows to a 90 degree angle. Pause once the upper arms form a 90 degree angle. Push yourself back up to the starting position. Repeat 5 times.

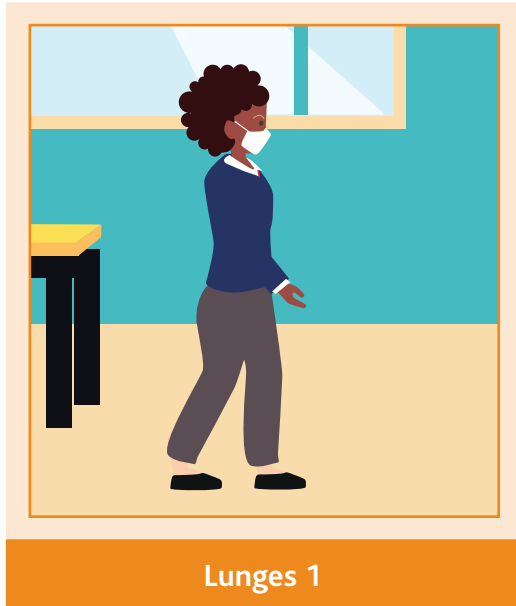


Wall Sit 1

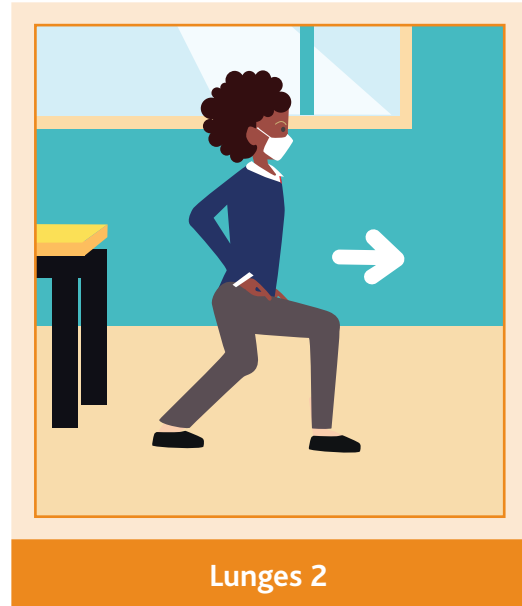


Wall Sit 2

Wall Sit: Stand tall against a wall with your head and back touching the wall. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and a few inches away from the wall. Rest both arms at your sides. Bend the knees and lower into a squat position until your thighs are parallel to the floor and hold the position for 20-30 seconds. Return to starting position by straightening your knees and standing tall again. Repeat once more.



Lunges 1



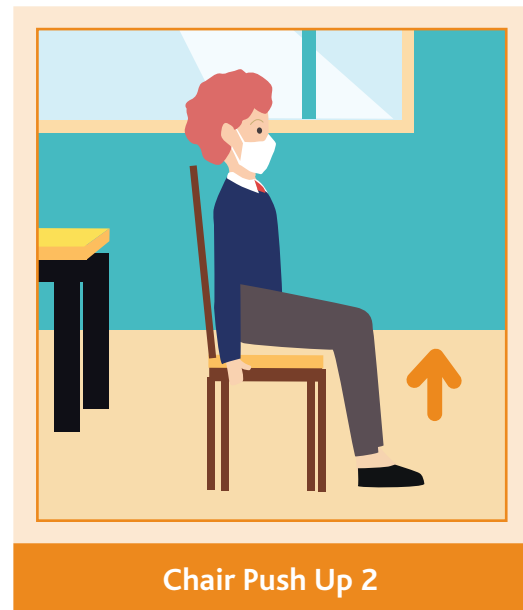
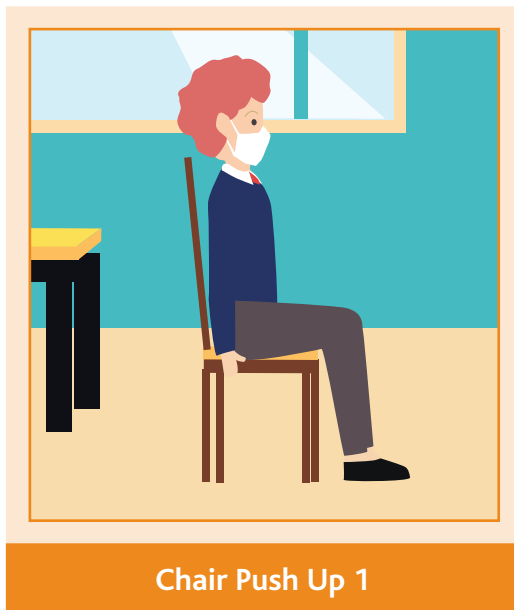
Lunges 2

Lunges: Stand with feet hip width apart and place hands on your hips. Step forward with your left leg and slowly lower the right knee towards the ground until the front knee is bent at least 90 degrees. Keep the rear knee just off the floor. Keep the torso upright and look forward. Pause and hold, then push off the front foot to return to the standing. Alternate with right and left leg one at a time. Repeat to complete a lunge on each leg 5 times.

c) Calming/Organising Movements (Seated and Standing)

The following are instructions for leading calming/organising movements in seated and standing positions. The movements below provide general recommendations on the amount of time to spend doing a movement and the number of repetitions to complete. However, as per guidance in section 2 and 3, it is advised that teachers should be mindful of the space available, individual students' needs and the COVID-19 school guidelines and guidance when choosing a movement to use.

This section contains three different types of calming/organising movements **Muscle Work Movements, Yoga Movements and Breathing/Relaxation Movements.**

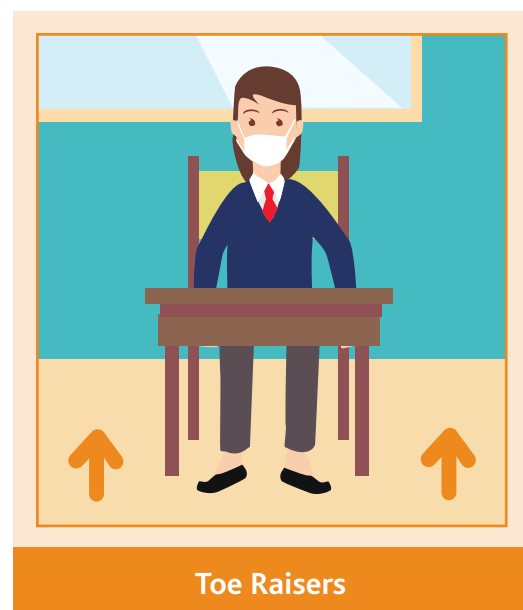


i. 'Muscle Work' Movements

Toe Raisers: Stand or sit with feet hip-width apart. Raise your toes (not heels) off the ground one at a time. Repeat 10 times.

Chair Push Up: Sitting on the edge of the chair, grab the edges of the seat and push up so your bottom is lifted off the chair. Hold for 5-10 seconds.

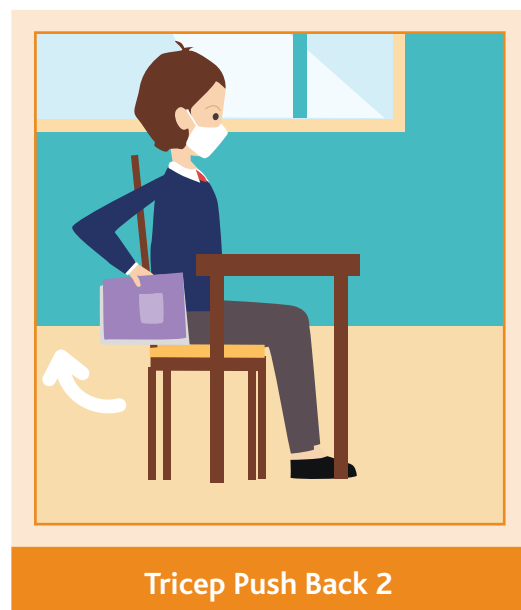
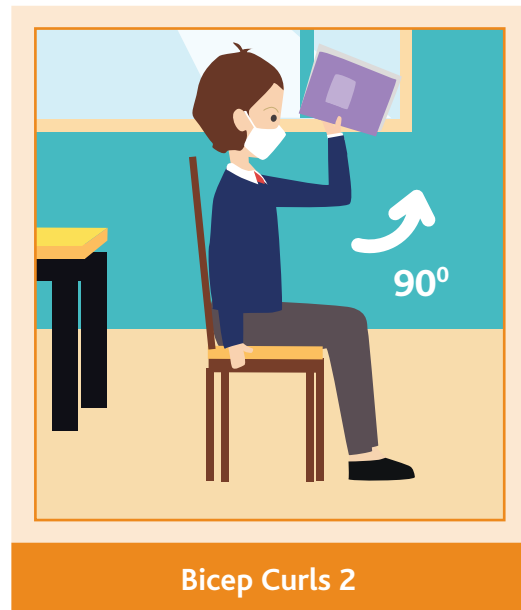
Chair Pull Down: Grab the legs of the chair in each hand and pull your bottom into the chair's surface for 5 to 10 seconds.

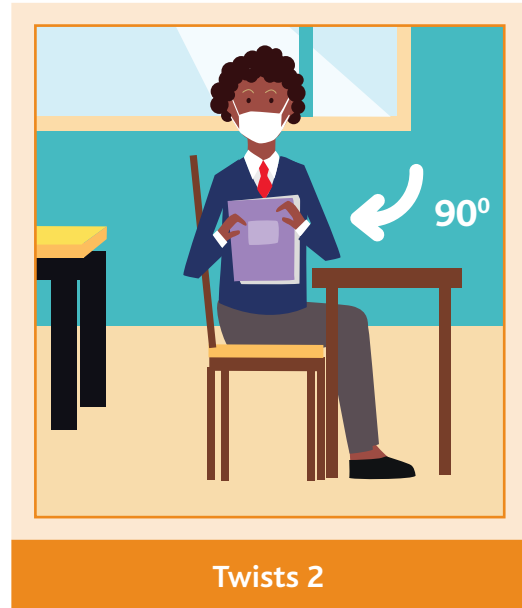
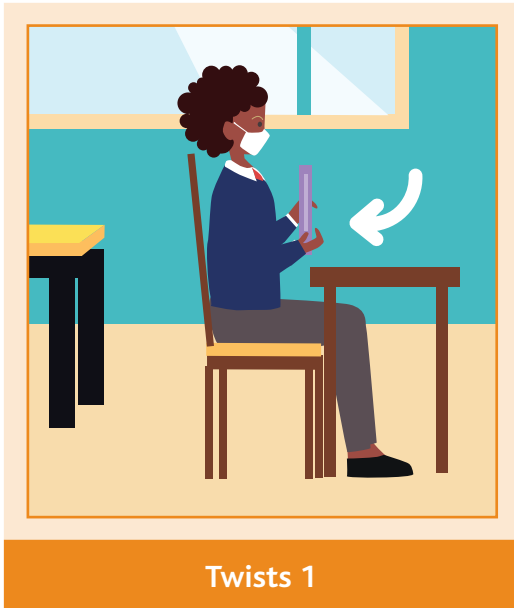


Textbook /School Bag Aerobics

Have the students take out a textbook or school bag and use them to do the following exercises:

- **Bicep Curls:** Hold the book in one hand and bend at the elbow to raise the book towards your shoulder.
- **Triceps Push Backs:** Hold the book in one hand and lean forward over the desk with the other hand holding the desk. Hold the arm up with the book parallel to the body, bend the elbow to 90° and raise and lower the book extending backward up to shoulder level.





- **Twists:** Hold the book to the chest with both hands and twist slowly from side to side.
- **Overhead Lifts:** Hold the book in one or two hands and lift it above the head in one smooth motion. Hold for 10 seconds.

ii. Yoga Movements

Yoga and sports interventions have been identified as activities which positively support mental health, behaviour and social participation of children and youth. Engagement in physical activities, particularly those that enhance the mind–body connection can enhance mental health and support students in developing their behaviour and emotional regulation skills (Cahill, Egan & Seber, 2020).

Breathing can help students attune to their bodily sensations, feelings and stress levels. It can help calm and regulate students. In yoga, movements are guided by the breath and checking into the breath before and after a sequence is recommended.

The following are examples of gentle upper body yoga movements which can be easily adapted and completed in a seated or a standing position. Teachers can read aloud the sample scripts, respecting the pauses, and demonstrating the movements to support students to participate (Stephens, 2010).

Breathing: In a seated position, place both feet flat on the ground, feet and body facing forward, (pause) straighten your back and spine, sitting upright in your chair. Slowly take a deep breath in and out. Place one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach or lower rib cage, (pause) slowly take a breath in through your nose (pause), feel your belly and rib cage rise with each inhale and notice how your chest falls with each exhale. Sitting tall, spend a few moments here.

Shoulder Stretch: Sit up nice and tall, take a deep breath in...and a slow long exhale. Now drop the hands onto the knees. Roll shoulders forward and backwards in circular motions. On an inhale squeeze shoulders up to the ears, hold (pause) and on an exhale slowly release. Repeat this a number of times, noticing how the neck and shoulders feel.



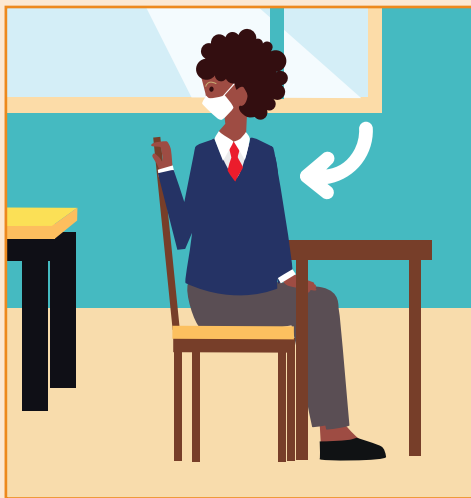
Breathing



Shoulder Stretch

Side Stretch/Twist: Bring your right hand to the outer edge of your left leg. Bring your left hand behind you for a gentle twist. Inhale lift your heart, exhale twist a little more. Release and come back to centre. Repeat on the other side.

Cat/Cow: Gently move forward on your chair. Sitting straight and lengthening your spine long with both feet on the ground. On an inhale arch the spine back (pause) roll your shoulders down, opening the chest. On an exhale round the spine (pause) and lower chin to chest, letting the shoulders and head come forward. Repeat these movements for a few rounds. Gentle inhaling and exhaling as you move.



Side Stretch/Twist



Cat/Cow

Sunshine Arms: Inhale straighten arms by your side and sweep both arms up over head to touch. Exhale and gently bring both your arms back to your side (pause) and repeat. Gently inhaling and exhaling as you move.

Hand Press: Gently press both hands and fingers together in prayer position across your chest. Pushing both hands against each other and hold here for three breaths. Slowly inhaling and exhaling as you push. Release the pressure on the hands for a breath and push again.



Sunshine Arms



Hand Press



Eagle Arms



Forward Fold

Eagle Arms: Bend your elbows, (pause) cross your left elbow over the right elbow. Press the back of your hands together, (pause) or wrap your left hand around your right hand and press your palms together. Move your elbows up and keep your fingers active. Lengthen your spine, broaden through the collarbones. (Do the same on the other side of the body) Hold here for a few breaths and gently release. Repeat with the left arm underneath.

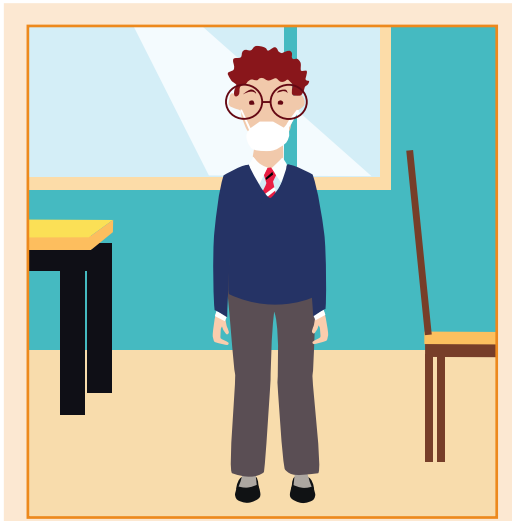
Forward Fold: Slowly move forward from your hips (pause), folding forward until your stomach is resting on your legs (pause) and your hands are touching the floor or ankles. Look at the ground. Inhaling and exhaling here. Inhale and gently come back up to seated and release.



Gentle Back Bend

Gentle Back Bend: Sit back on your chair for a gentle back bend. Interlace fingers behind your chair and look up. Releasing and slowly coming back to centre. Take a moment to check in on your breathing and how your body feels after this gentle movement exercise.

Additional Standing Yoga Movements



Standing/Mountain Pose

Standing/Mountain Pose: Stand with your feet hip width apart, pour your weight into your feet. Hug your outer hips to the midline, (pause) pelvis staked over the foundations of your feet. Lengthen through the front, sides and back of the body. Broaden through the collarbones, lengthen through the spine to the tip of your crown (pause) looking forward. Use the breath as a focus point, you do not need to change your breathing, (pause) instead just pay attention to your breath.



Rocket/Side Twist

Rocket/Side Twist: Press your hands together in prayer position across your chest (pause) and reach to the sky like a rocket. Inhale, reach arms straight over head. Reach to the right, (pause) extending and grounding down through the hips, hold here. Stretch and reach over to the right. Come back to centre and hold in centre for a breath. Inhale extend both hands over to the left, (pause) grounding down in the chair. Inhale and exhale in this side stretch and (pause) gently come back to centre.

iii. Breathing and Relaxation Activities

The following activities can be done at the end of a movement sequence or in isolation with your class to support students to feel calm and regulated.

Mindful Breathing & Body Scan (adapted from Williams & Penman, 2011)

Gently come back to your breath, inhale and slowly exhale. You may like to close your eyes and put one hand on your chest (pause) and your other hand on your stomach (pause). Notice how your chest rises with each inhale and falls with each exhale. You may like to imagine your breath like the river of an ocean flowing in and flowing out. Try to stay focused on your breathing for the next few moments. Bring your attention to your body on your chair. Then feel the weight of your body on your chair. Make sure that your back is straight and that you are comfortable. Take a few deep breaths. While you are breathing relax your shoulders, (pause) your hands, your stomach muscles, (pause) the muscles in your face, let go off all the tightness in your body. Now bring your attention back to your breath. Notice how your breath feels against your mask, (pause) is it warm or cold? Filling your lungs and back out through your nose, (pause) notice your stomach and chest rise and fall each time you breathe. Now bring your attention to this process, (pause) focus on the feeling of the breath, the inhalation and exhalation. You may notice your mind wandering, if so, that is ok, (pause) that is what minds do. Try and bring your attention back into the room and focus on your breathing. Take some time here to check in how your body feels now. Slowly come back into the room and open your eyes.



Mindful Breathing & Body Scan

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise which can provide students with a gentle movement break whilst sitting in their chair. It is a relaxation exercise where students tense and release muscles and can be done whilst students wear a face mask. Progressive muscle relaxation can also reduce stress and anxiety in your body by slowly tensing and relaxing each muscle. For the full 'Progressive Muscle Relaxation' script please see Appendix A.

Section 4: What Strategies Can Support Me To Implement Movement Breaks Effectively?

This section will suggest some simple practical ideas and activities which may support you to introduce movement smoothly and effectively into your classroom.

a) How can I support students to transition back to learning?

At the end of your movement sequence, use of a short calming activity can support students to prepare for the transition back to learning, supporting them to regulate their arousal states accordingly. Examples of such activities may include:

- Completing a simple stretch (e.g. overhead stretch, arm stretch) holding the position for a specified number of seconds/breaths.
- Carrying out an 'energy check in'. Support students to identify their levels of energy/alertness following completion of the movement break, paying attention to how they feel, sound and look.
- Set 30/60 seconds on the clock and have students tune into their bodies and count how many breaths they take within that time period. Alternatively students may find their pulse and record how many beats counted in the allocated time.
- Take a two minute breather, just relax for two minutes and do nothing but listen to calming sounds or music.

b) How can I integrate movement into academic learning?

Movement can also be integrated into academic learning during class. Moving whilst learning can help students to stay regulated throughout a class, particularly those with additional needs. Below are some ideas on how to integrate movement into academic learning.

Stand Up: Ask students to stand up at different times during the class. For example stand when answering a question, when reading out loud, when they are finished a piece of work, when they would like to ask a question. The act of standing expands more energy, increases the blood flow, oxygen uptake and muscular fitness.

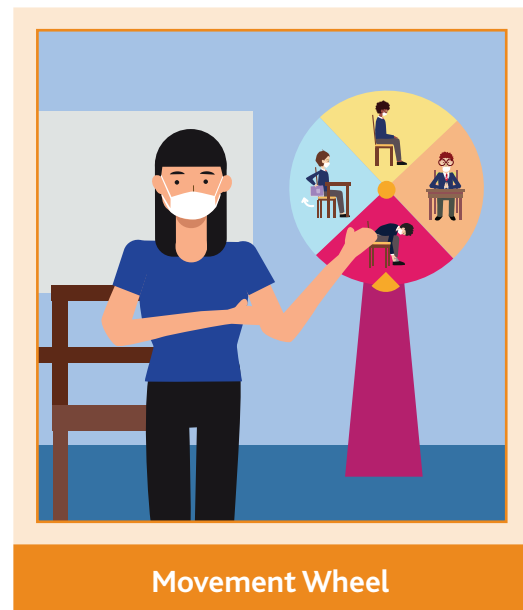
True or False/Agree or Disagree: Have students respond to a question by moving instead of just speaking or writing. For example, ask a question and if a student thinks the answer is true or they agree, ask them to jump in one spot for 15 seconds. If a student thinks the answer is false or they disagree, ask them to touch their toes.

Revision Quiz: Ask all students to stand at their individual desks. Half the class call out answers to quiz questions as quickly as they can. While they are answering the questions, the other half of the class have to complete a movement activity such as hold a squat, do air skips or chair push ups. Time how long it takes them to answer all questions correctly. Then have the class swap over.

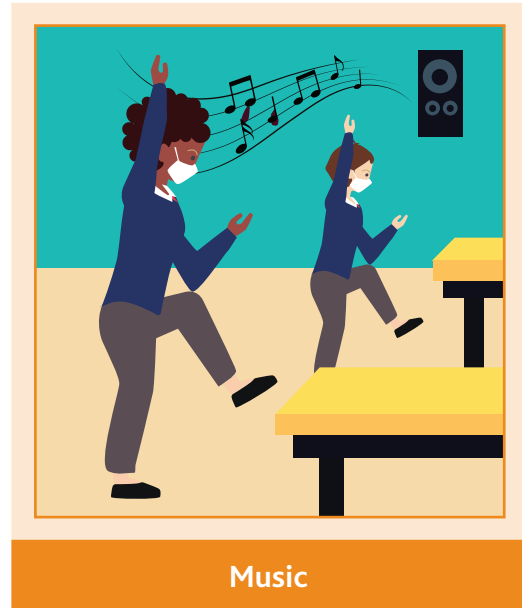
c) How can I encourage student participation and ownership?

Involving students in the design and selection of movement breaks will support them to stay motivated and interested. Some ideas on how to get your students involved are as follows:

- Ask for student input on what they would like to do for movement breaks. Conduct a **Class Vote** and let them choose between a few exercises.



- Create a class **Movement Wheel** using an online platform such as Wheel Decide.
- Create a Lucky Dip where one student chooses at random a movement from a selection of alerting activities and calming activities.
- Use the template in Appendix B to create a **Movement Dice** with your own chosen movement activities. Why not create an alerting dice and a calming dice to have to hand for every class. Students may also like to design their own movement dice with their preferred movements included.



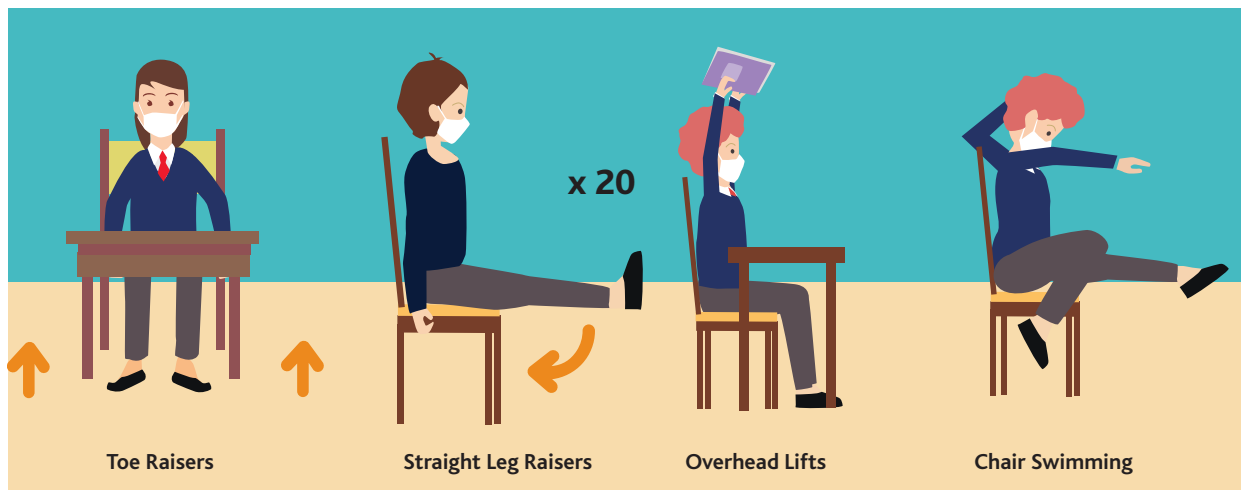
- Have a **student lead** a movement break doing any activities of the class's choosing. Be creative and have everyone in the class get involved.
- Incorporate appropriate **music** that appeals to the students to encourage movement. Choose a song with repetitive lyrics whenever the class hears a certain lyric, they have to complete a certain movement. For example, every time the lyric 'happy' is heard in the song 'Happy' by Pharrell Williams the students have to do a quarter turn squat jump.
- Use a **visual countdown timer** on the board to motivate the students to keep moving for the agreed amount of time.
- Create **personalised movement picture cards** of students completing their favourite movement activities. Students can choose from these cards when designing the class movement break.

- Create a **Classroom Workout Circuit**. Have students do the following for 20-60 seconds each (feel free to mix up the order but ensure to always end on a calming or weight bearing activity):

Standing Circuit Example



Seated Circuit Example



d) What are the key messages to remember?



Keep it Simple

- When introducing movement to your classroom, start with one or two simple movements. Gradually expand to other movements as you and your class become comfortable with physical activity being part of the classroom routine.
- Be mindful of students' comfort levels and confidence when engaging in movements.

Keep it Fresh and Fun

- To keep students motivated it is important to have a variety of movement activities in your toolkit. Keep students involved. Seek their feedback. Encourage creativity.

Keep it Factual

- It is important to inform students why physical activity throughout the day is necessary (it gets the blood flowing to the brain so they can think better and will feel more alert).
- Provide students with clear expectations and instructions for movement to optimise success in the classroom. This can help students to feel more relaxed and prepared.

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Appendix A

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise which can provide students with a gentle movement break whilst sitting in their chair. It is a relaxation exercise where students tense and release muscles and can be done whilst students wear a face mask. Progressive muscle relaxation also reduces stress and anxiety in your body by slowly tensing and relaxing each muscle. Teachers can read aloud the sample script and demonstrate the movements to support students to participate. Davis, Eshelman, & McKay (2008).

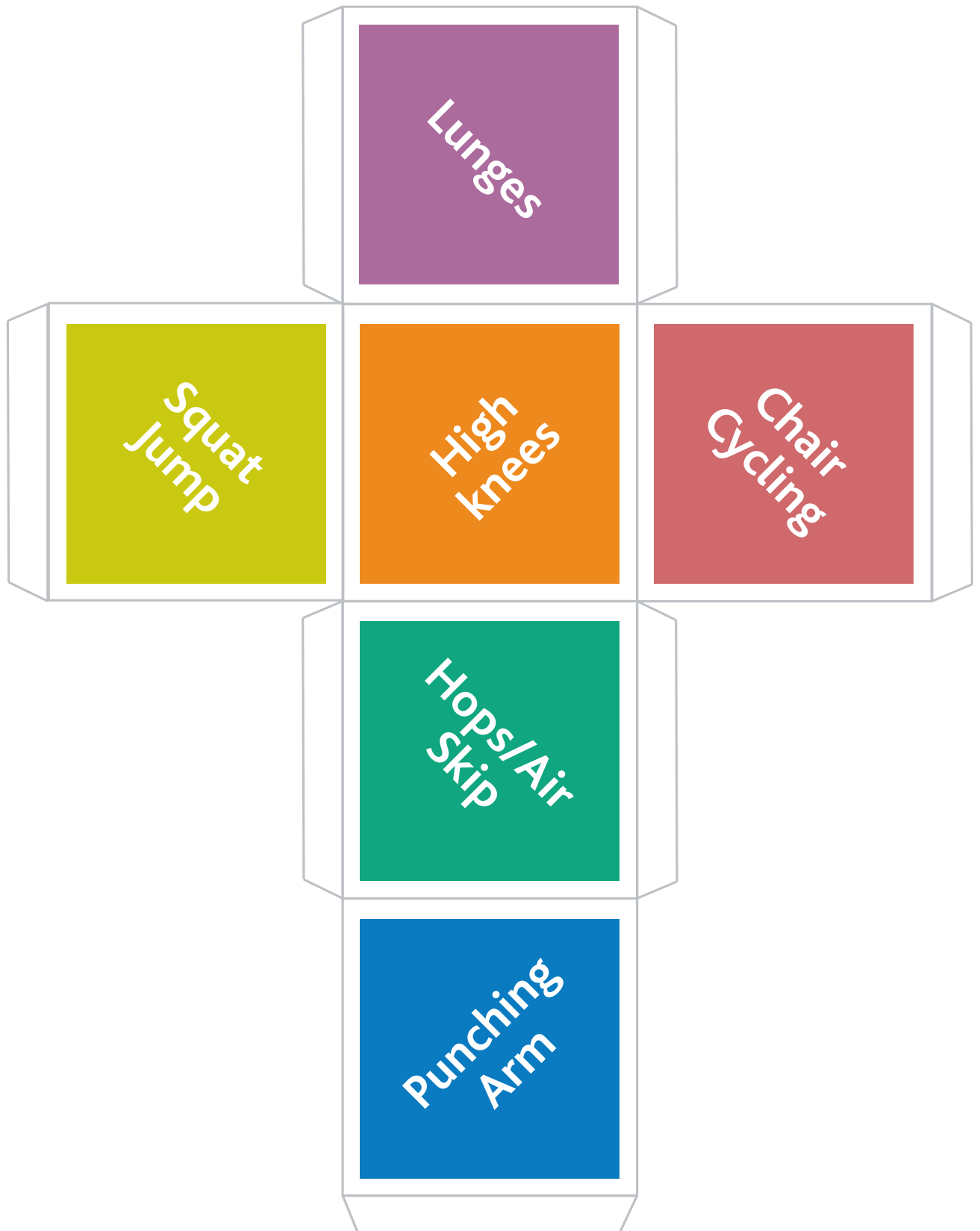
Focus on your breathing: Begin by becoming aware of your breathing. *Take a deep breath in and hold and then slowly exhale. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so. Take another deep breath in, hold it and slowly breathe out, letting go of the tension. Continue to do this slow breathing for another three breaths.*

Bring awareness to your feet and toes, breathing in deeply and slowly releasing. Curl your toes down and tense the muscles in the soles of your feet and release the muscles in your feet as you exhale (repeat x2). Now bring your awareness to the back of your lower legs, tighten these muscles and hold and let the muscles go limp as you exhale. Feel your muscles relax. Now tense the front of the thighs, hold for a moment and release (repeat x2). Now, gradually tighten muscles in your lower back, hold this for a few seconds and release and repeat. Feel the tension leaving your muscles, relaxing more and more. Gradually tighten all the muscles in your legs from your feet to your lower back and hold, gently release and notice your body feeling more relaxed (repeat x 2).

Now bring your awareness to your stomach and tighten these muscles. Release your breath and let go on an exhale, repeat. Now focus on your back, draw in a nice deep breath and then tighten these muscles and release your breath and letting go of any tension. Bring awareness to your shoulder muscles and your neck. Slowly draw in a nice deep breath and bring your shoulders up to your ears and squeeze these muscles firmly and slowly release and repeat. Let go of all the tension in your arms and hands, tighten the muscles in your arms and hands and slowly release. Notice how relaxing it is to release that tension. Now, tighten the muscles in your face, squeeze your eyes closed, breathing in and out and then relax all your facial muscles, feel your face softening (repeat). Bring awareness to the muscles in your jaw, open your mouth as wide as you can and exhale and allow your mouth to gently close (repeat). Now, let your mouth relax and let the breath float out, listen to the sound of your breathing and notice how your body feels now. Noticing if your body feels relaxed and calm. Gently come back to the classroom. Stephens, (2010).

Appendix B

Sample Movement Dice for Alerting Movements



Create Your Own Movement Dice Template

