

20 Brilliant Brain Breaks

This collection of simple, fun ideas will be a real hit with children of all ages. These short, engaging activities will allow children to take their feet off the pedal for a few minutes, mobilise different parts of the brain and make learning even more enjoyable.



1. Dance, Dance, Dance

Put on a groovy tune and either get someone to lead with a few moves or simply freestyle it out! A fantastic way to be silly and then refocus with more energy.



2. Secret Handshake

Ask children to create a secret handshake with a partner. They only have 5 minutes to rehearse and memorize it!



3. Blink and Snap

A variation on the rubbing tummy and patting head idea, but with the same intention of engaging both sides of the brain. Ask children to blink their left eye, whilst snapping their fingers on their right hand, then do it with the opposite sides – right eye and left hand. Can they alternate a few times in a row?

4. Doodle Break

Set a timer for five minutes and allow children to doodle or colour-in silently as their minds wander. You might play mellow, calming music for an even more relaxing experience.



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5. Balloon Challenge

Blow up a balloon and ask children to make a circle. The objective is to keep the balloon in the air for as long as possible without using their hands - heads, elbows, shoulders and feet are allowed! Time it. What's the longest you can manage? Can you beat it next time?

6. Rock, Paper, Scissors Championship

Two people stand at the front and play one round of Rock, Paper, Scissors. The winner 'collects' the loser as part of her team and chooses their next opponent. Two groups form and cheer for their side until everyone has had a turn. A great way to create a fun atmosphere whilst having a quick break.



7. The Popcorn Challenge!

The whole class sit in their chairs. At any time, one child can jump up and shout "Pop!"

Once they do, that child remains standing. The object is for the whole class to be standing. However, if two or more children pop up at the same time, everybody must sit back down. How quickly can the whole class pop?



8. Dance the Macarena

Don't save it for the school disco! Teach children the popular Macarena dance, or perhaps the Cha-Cha Slide. Fabulous for memory and movement.

9. Invisible Pictures

In pairs, ask children to take turns drawing a picture in the air for their partner to guess. To narrow down the possibilities, provide a category to choose from, such as food or animals.

10. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Choose 5 movements, for example, star jump, hop on the left leg, squat, deep breath, stretch your arms, touch your toes etc. Create a decreasing sequence to do together – 5 squats, 4 stretches, 3 toe touches, 2 deep breaths and 1 star jump.

12. Beans, Beans, Beans!

Call out different bean names. Children make the corresponding shape or movement.

Runner – run on the spot

Broad – make yourself as wide as possible

French – say “Ooh la la!”

Baked – fan yourself and pretend to be boiling hot

Jumping bean – jump on the spot

Has bean – lie (or stand) very still

Jellybean – wobble your whole body

Add more beans to this list as required!

11. Syllable Stomp

Chant something everyone knows, such as a nursery rhyme, and get children stamp their feet for every syllable. This will activate different parts of the brain as they speak and stomp together.



13. Hey, my name is Joe (Button Factory)

This rhyme with actions is so entertaining and children love the repetition and rhythm. Add on each movement as the verses build up to the funny ending!

[Lyrics | Sing Up](#)

14. Balancing Act

Give each child a paper plate to balance on their head.

If you have space, ask pupils to walk around the room. If a child's plate drops off, they must freeze until another child picks it up and puts it back on their head.

If there is no space for walking, call out movements for children to do on the spot whilst balancing their plates. E.g., Raise your left knee and put your hand behind your back. Turn around 5 times on the spot.



15. Play dough

Give each child a small lump of play dough and challenge them to make an object in whatever time limit you choose.

This can really get the brain and hands working together, especially if the object is something quite unusual, e.g. an octopus with a wooden leg!



16. Bring on the storm

Sit or stand at a table and begin by slowly tapping one finger, then two, then three until you are using your whole hand to make a loud racket as though in the middle of a storm. Reverse the movements as the rain and thunder ebb away.



17. Hot Hands

This is a simple and very speedy break for a quick re-set. Ask children to rub their hands together vigorously until they are warm, then close their eyes and place their palms over them. Take a few deep breaths in and out.



18. S'now worry at all!

This is a lovely way to tackle worries and relieve stress. Give children scraps of white paper and ask them to write anything that is worrying them. (It is magic paper, so if writing is a problem, they can simply say it to the paper or add a picture!) Once the worry is on there, scrunch it up into a snowball and throw it away. Hey Presto, the worry is gone!

19. Act it out!

Think of some silly scenarios for children to act out on the spot. You might write a few beforehand (or ask children to come up with them) and then choose by pulling them out of a hat. For example: Pretend to stroke an angry cat. Imagine that a giant is hovering above you. Pretend to write an angry message on a computer. Pop 50 bubbles as quickly as you can.

20. Make a spinning board

Add an element of excitement to the choices by using a spinning board or similar!



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