

Active 30 Ideas



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Active 30 Ideas

Quick lesson breaks to improve behaviour, focus and concentration.


Sitting still for long periods is not only bad for our long-term health, it's bad for behaviour, focus and concentration too.

There are some easy ways to build in physical activity and break up sitting time that should help you make your lessons more active, engaging and enjoyable.


Keep Active Ideas

Here are a few simple ways you can adapt your regular classroom routines to make them a bit more physically active. Our work with schools has shown that these small changes don't significantly impact on your teaching time, and that they can help pupils remain focused and attentive for longer.


ACTIVE PUPILS PERFORM BETTER




ACADEMIC RESULTS IMPROVE




HAPPIER, MORE MOTIVATED AND CONFIDENT PUPILS







BRAIN FUNCTION IMPROVES
Brain functioning improves leading to better concentration and learning




SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT IMPROVES
Stronger school engagement with improved attendance and behaviour



PUPIL ENGAGEMENT IMPROVES
Short bursts of activity in classrooms improve pupils engagement for up to one hour after



SOURCES
Start Active, Stay Active, 2017
Nike Active Schools, 2015
The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment



THE LONGER TERM IMPACT OF ACTIVE SCHOOLS
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Ideas with videos

10 minute Shake Up

Change4Life 10 minute shake up - <https://vimeo.com/132353068> - a good example of ways to break up the day with 10 minutes of activity.

There are plenty of examples around including a full set of Change4Life 10 minute shake ups;

<https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups#VrV8F29sdrtAJyJD.97>

Gonoodle

Gonoodle is a free, American site with a wealth of ideas and activities aimed at primary schools, most of which are accompanied by video clips. <https://app.gonoodle.com/>
You do have to register but it is free.

BBC Supermovers

A series of short clips with exercise to music.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/supermovers/42612496>

Classroom Winter Olympics

When pupils sit still for too long, their core muscles become less and less active and their posture gets worse. Poor posture leads to slower, less tidy handwriting and poorer attention.

To re-activate the core muscles, try some of these Winter Olympic events from your chairs.

- **Downhill slalom:** Pupils should sit up straight on their chairs and follow you (or a Youtube video clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F23sHW3zIRk> such as **this**), leaning left and right through the slalom course. Beginners can keep hands on the chair and feet on the floor, intermediates can lift their hands up and advanced can lift hands and feet in the air.
- **Ski Jump:** Lean forward in your chair with feet off the ground to simulate the approach, then lift your bottom off of the chair using your arms to simulate the flight. You can copy a clip like **this** or have a class competition to see who can hold themselves up the longest.
- **Bobsleigh:** Stand behind your chair and run on the spot, using a video like **this** for timing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnJArS1QDkk>. When the driver jumps



in their sled, sit down in your chair. Lean left when the driver steers left, lean right to go right. Lean forward to go faster and lean back at the end to slow down. This can be done at the pupils' desks, or, for a competition, lined up in teams of four. The best synchronised team wins.



Ideas for getting into Groups

The washing line idea

This can help to group children differently as well as be an activity to help team build. Line up in birthday order (first letter of first name, order of the number of their house etc).

Find a partner

Stand up – move around the room.

Shake hands/fist pump every time you pass another person.

Teacher calls stop – your partner is who is closest now.

Body Parts Game

Move around the space (perhaps to music) – call out a number and a body part. e.g. 3 ankles or 4 wrists or 12 feet.

They need to get into a group that will add up to those numbers of body parts.



Ideas for 3/5 minute activities to break up a lesson

Check for understanding

There will be times when you want to get a quick visual check of a group's understanding of something – some teachers use 'thumbs up and down', some use a red or green coloured page on a planner.

It is very easy instead to ask the whole class to stand up, and to stay standing if they agree with a certain statement.

For example, 'stay standing if you agree that there and their are examples of synonyms' (they're not!). A quick series of four or five questions will get everyone up and moving out of their chairs, reducing sitting time, engaging core muscles, raising pulses a little but not reducing teaching time.

A bolt of energy

Everybody stands up and makes a 'Usain Bolt lightning bolt' shape.

On 'go!' everyone runs as hard as they can on the spot for six seconds before finishing with a 'Mo Farah mobot' pose.

Pupils should feel that their heart is beating faster, a little out of breath and a little hotter. More blood will be pumping around the body, and more oxygen will be reaching the brain. The effects of this high intensity exercise can have a positive effect on the metabolism for several hours.

- For pupils with mobility challenges, they could wave their arms or clap their hands as hard as they can for six seconds.
- You can adapt the start and finish shapes to fit a topic they are studying, such as making dinosaur shapes, letter shapes or mathematical signs.

Multiple Choice

If you have a group question that gives alternative outcomes as answers (a maths problem, for instance) try using different body shapes to signify the different choices. You could create your own shapes based on yoga positions or ask the students to create shapes based on a topic you are studying.



Agree or Disagree

For questions that require more of an opinion, you can ask your pupils to stand along a continuum that runs through the centre of the teaching space. 'Stand at this end if you agree strongly, stand at the far end if you disagree strongly, or stand somewhere in between.' This is also a way of bringing together pupils for pair or group discussions. If you want them to talk with someone with a different idea or opinion, cut the line in half and ask each half group to walk past the other towards the far edge of the room until the two lines are facing one another.

Registration Race

Could you turn register time, which can be a bit of a drain on enthusiasm for all concerned, into a 'Mexican wave' where pupils stand up in turn and call out their name? Some classes have turned it into a race against the clock, trying to beat their previous fastest time as a group. You can also change the order in which the group stand up, going from back to front, or ordering by first name, or birthday.

The fifteen minute rule

Advice from experts says that we should avoid sitting down for longer than 15 minutes at a time. When you are engaged in a sustained piece of work, it can be easy to forget this, so perhaps you could run a countdown clock on the whiteboard so that everyone stands up and stretches

A list of exercises that can be performed in classrooms.

Arm Circles	Backstroke action	High knees
Cross knee lifts	Freestyle swimming	Grapevine
Hamstring curl	Hop	Jog on spot
Jump on spot	Jumping Jacks	Kick backs
Kick front	Cross and side kicks	lunges
March	Skip on spot	Squat
Step touch	Box step	Trunk twist
Walk on spot	Elbow to opposite knee	

Chair Aerobics

- Pull chair away from desk
- Sit up straight
- Keep ankles together
- Extend legs to 180 degrees
- Lower legs slowly
- Repeat 20 times



Stand Up – leg extension

Hold chair back for balance

- Extend right leg to 45 degree angle to right side
- Repeat 20 times
- Extend left leg to 45 degrees angle to left side
- Repeat 20 times

No Stress Test

5 minutes walking break before a test.

Followed by controlled deep breathing to relax.

True or False

When asking questions that can have a true or false answer (or yes or no)

Children stand up behind their chair

- Jumping jacks if they think the answer is true
- High knees if they think the answer is false

Shake it

Remain seated

Raise Hands

- Shake right hand x 10
- Shake left hand x 10
- Shake right foot x 10
- Shake left foot x 10

Repeat counting down 9,8,7 etc – sometimes count slowly, sometimes speed it up.

Write your name

(or something else – like the answer to a question)

Write with index finger in large cursive writing

Then use foot, knee, elbow, belly button, head to do the same thing (or a different answer)

Rainstorm

You lead

Light rain – rub hands together

Slightly harder – lightly clap

Harder – slap thighs

Harder – slap thighs and stamp feet

Then do in reverse – about 20 seconds for each stage



Tap

Stand and Face chair. Hands on hips.

- Tap left foot 20 times on seat of chair
- Tap right foot 20 times on seat of chair
- Tap alternate feet 20 times on seat of chair
- As become more proficient hold arms overhead as it is done

Balancing Act

Lift left foot up 5 inches – hold for 30 seconds

Rest and repeat x 3

Switch legs

(Talk about tightening abdominal muscles and focusing straight ahead)

More advanced – hold arms parallel to ears with palms together above head.

Plank

Body in straight line

Lean on elbows and toes

Make sure elbows are directly below shoulders- palms flat on floor with fingers pointing forwards

No bottoms in the air – body parallel

Hold for 30 seconds to start with.

Increase time held as they gain experience.

Ruler

Put a ruler on the floor between feet.

High knees fast for 1 minute keeping feet either side of ruler without touching it.

Rest for 10 seconds.

Stand facing ruler – feet together jump over and back for 1 minute.

Rest for 10 seconds.

Stand beside ruler – jump side to side for 1 minute.

Alarm

Have a pre agreed sound as an alarm.

Make the noise without warning.

They move outside – do 1 circuit of a prearranged course- come back in sit down and carry on with what they were doing.

(the first time this happens talk them through it with behaviours etc)

Breathing

Teach breathing in through nose and out through mouth. For calming when panicked or nervous.



In for count of 5 - hold

Out for count of 5 – hold

Repeat – talking them through the pace – allow them to close their eyes if they wish.

Isometric routine

- Tight fist – 20 x bicep curl
- Raise arms straight out to sides – to shoulder level – then lower arms on 3 count – lift back up for 3. X 20
- Right elbow to left knee
- Left elbow to right knee
- 30 lifts

Do all of this x 3.

Stand up – jump-sit down

Read aloud – you or a student.

When they hear certain words they silently stand up jump and sit down.

The words are prearranged eg Shakespeare – when they hear thee, thou or thine.

Yoga cize

Hands on hips.

Position side of foot on inside of opposite leg – hold for 30 sec.

Slowly move arms straight out while bending forward.

Extend foot behind.

Hold for as long as possible.

(Tighten abdominal muscles and focus on a spot to keep still)

Keep Trying everytime a fail happens.

Repeat on other side.

Fighting Fatigue for 3 minutes

Bounce from foot to foot

1 minute.

Bounce from foot to foot and punch straight up – left then right

1 minute.

Bounce from foot to foot and punch out in front – left then right

1 minute.

Arm Curls

Use a book to hold.

Bicep curl do 12 slowly (count 5 on up and 5 on down)

Do 3 set on each arm in turn.



Getting Warmer

One child goes from room.

Hide an object (they must know what it is and what they are looking for)

Students left in the room must be silent and guide the seeking student by movements.

Indicate left, right, forward etc by doing the following:

Backwards – backstroke action

Left or right – side bend to the right or left

Forward – March on spot

Up higher – knee lifts/climbing action

Lower – knee down

When student gets close – classmates pretend they are standing on something hot – tip toe running on spot quickly.

Class Pass Challenge

All standing

Teacher throws a sponge ball (or rolled up piece of paper) to a student

They throw to another student and sit down

They then throw to another etc.

Last standing throws back to teacher

How quickly can they do it

How many times can they do it in 3 minutes

Hands / knees / cone

Teacher commands

Head – touch head

Knees – touch knees

Cone – pick up cone

Teacher says “ head, knees, head, knees etc”

Can have shoulders, elbow and feet added.

When they say cone pick it up.

Score points

Back to back

Sit back to back on the floor – link arms at elbow

Knees bent – feet flat

Push against each other to stand up – without using hands

Success comes from working together

How many times can they sit and stand in 15 secs.



Tally Score

In pairs

Fist pump x 3 – on 3 open hand with 1 – 5 fingers showing

First to add up the number from both hands chooses an activity eg lunge, jumping jacks, knee lifts etc x 10.

Create a handshake

Find a partner – create a unique and active handshake.

Go to another partner – teach them yours – learn theirs.

Put them together.

How many can you learn in 5 minutes.

Line Dancing

2 steps to the right

2 steps to the left

2 steps back

Tap forward with right foot

Right foot kick

$\frac{1}{4}$ turn to left

Repeat.

Clock

Students stand up

Right arm – minute hand

Left arm – hour hand

Call out different times – move into correct position for that time.

Make change quicker

Hold position every so often – particularly if arms are horizontal.

Add it up

List 10 exercises on the board

Students face one another

Fist pump 1, 2, 3 on 3 show hand with number of fingers showing.

Add up number and do exercise on the board with that number for 30 secs.

Repeat.

Seat Belts

Participants place their right hand on their right shoulder and their left hand on their left hip and swap hand positions, crossing themselves across the front of their body as they did so. This action is repeated 8 times and then participants swap to do a further



8 repetitions with the opposite starting orientation (i.e. with their left hand starting on their left shoulder and their right hand beginning on their right hip). They then do 4 repetitions in each orientation and finally 2 repetitions in each orientation.

Breaststroke

Participants stand with their legs shoulder width apart and arms stretched up above their heads with their hands together, once their hands are stretched as high as they can go they pull them down and away from each other in a motion similar to a swimming breaststroke. As the stroke comes down participants bend their knees and bring their hands back in front of them ready to repeat. They repeat this movement 8 times taking a count of 8 seconds for each stretch.

Teapot

Participants stand with their legs shoulder width apart and stretch one arm straight above their head. Keeping their back straight they then stretch across with their raised hand to the opposite side of their body. This was done 8 times alternating sides.

Calf Pump

Participants stand behind a chair with one leg slightly in front of themselves and the other slightly behind. Grasping the back of the chair with their hands to take their weight, they bend the knee of the forward leg whilst keeping their other leg straight. Leaning forwards into the chair participants will feel the stretch in the calf of their straightened leg. This stretch was repeated 8 times alternating legs.

Race of a Lifetime

Participants are required to sprint, on the spot, for a count of 8 seconds four times. For the first and third counts of 8 participants only use their arms. For the second count and fourth counts participants use both their arms and legs.

Five basic jumps

With two feet on the ground, shoulder width apart, participants jump from two feet to land on two feet; then jump from two feet to land on one foot; jump from that foot to land on the other foot; jump from that foot to land on it again and finally jump from that foot again to land on two feet. This movement is repeated four times at a steady pace following the refrain “, two to two, two to one, one to the other, one to the same, and one to two.”

Spin

Participants cross one leg over the other in front of them and spin around in the direction of the crossed leg. Having spun around participants then spin back without repositioning their feet. This spin was repeated four times with each leg.



Spotty Dog

Participants stand with one leg and one arm stretched in front and one behind with arms opposing legs (i.e. if the left leg was in front the left arm would point behind). Participants then jump on the spot switching their limb's positions (i.e. what was pointing in front now pointed behind and vice versa). Participants do this four times and then on the fourth jump turn 90° to face their right, repeat the action another four times and then again on their final jump turn a further 90° to face in the opposite direction from where they started. This pattern repeats a further two times until participants are back facing in their original direction.

Twister

With legs together participants jump forwards and back and then, jumping on the spot, twist their hips to the left whilst doing so. They then mirror this 'twist-jump' to the right. Participants jump forward and back followed by a twist jump to each side twice. This sequence was repeated four times.

Sun Down

Participants cross their feet and hands in front of them, clasping their hands as they do so at waist level. They then, only with their eyes, look up, then down, then left, then right and repeat this sequence. After this they circle their eyes to the right, circle their eyes to the left and repeat.

Heads up

Invite everyone to write the name of a famous person (sport/leaders/celebrities etc) on a post it. Fold them up and put into a bag/box. Everyone picks one out and sticks to their forehead. They can move around the room – they are allowed to ask 20 questions to different people to try and find out who they are.

Mexican Wave

The class do a Mexican wave starting with one person/table (may need rehearsing in the first place).

Every so often the teacher makes a signal (bell or noise that is pre arranged) and the children complete 3 mexican waves.

Comfort, stretch, panic

A comfort, stretch, panic continuum is where you ask the children to stand in a line – in a place on the continuum according to their feelings about something.

(a silly one could be how you would feel getting on a bus in fancy dress).

Could use it to get similar minded children standing near each other and then working with each other. Or you could then fold the continuum to get opposite levels of experience.



