

Energizers & Brain Breaks

Use this guide to quickly choose and lead a 30–60 second brain break when students need energy, focus, or calm.
Brain breaks are short, intentional resets that help students re-engage in learning.

1

What does your group need?



Energy

boosts alertness and engagement when students are sluggish or losing momentum



Focus

helps students refocus attention and re-engage with the task



Calm

supports regulation and stress relief when students feel overwhelmed or frustrated

2

How long?

30 seconds

60 seconds

90 seconds

3

Transitions

Before:

"Let's take a quick brain break to reset and get ready to keep learning."

After:

"Thanks for taking that break. Let's refocus and continue our work."

4

Active supervision



Stay visible and actively monitor students.



Keep movements controlled and age-appropriate.



Stop the activity immediately if it becomes unsafe.



Tutor should remain standing and visible during movement activities.



Space & Session Considerations

- Adjust movements based on the space you're in. Choose low-impact options in small or shared areas.
- Prioritize activities that allow quick reset and immediate return to instruction.
- When in doubt, select Focus or Calm activities to maintain pacing and minimize disruption.

Energizers & Brain Breaks

for younger students

Energy



Move & Freeze

Let's do a quick move-and-freeze. I'll call out a movement. When I say "freeze," everyone stops and holds their position.

- 1 Call out simple movements (marching, arm circles, jumping jacks).
- 2 Freeze every 5–10 seconds.
- 3 Repeat 2–3 rounds.

Keep movements controlled and safe. Use walking or light movement if space is limited.



Animal Moves

Let's move like animals for a quick brain break.

- 1 Call out one animal at a time (bear walk, bird arms).
- 2 Count to five for each animal.
- 3 Switch animals once or twice.

Choose animals that keep movements low and safe. No crawling under furniture or jumping.

Focus



Left-Right Wake-up

We're going to wake up both sides of our brain by crossing our body.

- 1 Touch right hand to left knee, then switch.
- 2 Alternate sides 10 times.
- 3 Go at a steady pace.

Keep movements controlled and safe. Use walking or light movement if space is limited.



Category Challenge

Let's do a quick thinking challenge before we continue.

- 1 Name one category (animals, foods, cities).
- 2 Give students 10 seconds to respond.
- 3 Responses can be spoken, raised hands, or silent thinking.

Keep it short and pressure-free. This is about engagement, not competition.

Calm



Stretch & Reset

Let's take a quick stretch to reset our bodies and focus our brains.

- 1 Lead stretches for arms, shoulders, neck, and back.
- 2 Count slowly to 10 for each stretch.
- 3 Model each movement clearly.

This is a calm reset. Avoid bouncing, jumping, or fast movements.



Shoulder Drop Reset

Let's reset by releasing tension in our shoulders.

- 1 Lift shoulders up toward ears.
- 2 Hold for three seconds. Drop shoulders down and relax.
- 3 Repeat 2–3 times.

Use a calm voice. This is best for stress, frustration, or tired students.

Energizers & Brain Breaks

for older students

Energy



Stand & Activate

Let's take 30 seconds to wake up our bodies and get ready to keep going.

- 1 Stand tall and march in place for 10 seconds.
- 2 Add arm swings or overhead reaches for 10 seconds.
- 3 Finish with quick shoulder rolls and deep breaths.

This is a quick activation, not free movement. Keep it controlled and brief.



Cross-body Focus

Let's do a quick cross-body movement to wake up our focus.

- 1 Touch right hand to left knee, then switch.
- 2 Alternate sides 10 times.
- 3 Move at a steady, comfortable pace.

Accuracy matters more than speed. Slow down if students appear unsure.

Focus



Quick Poll

Let's do a quick check with a game of 'agree or disagree.'

- 1 Tutor says a statement aloud (e.g., "I like working in groups.")
- 2 Students respond by showing:
 - Thumbs up = Agree, Thumbs down = Disagree, Thumb sideways = Not sure
- 3 Tutor invites a few students to explain their choice.

This builds peer connection and opens space for discussion without pressure.



Category Challenge

Let's do a quick thinking challenge before we continue.

- 1 Name one category (animals, foods, cities).
- 2 Give students 10 seconds to respond.
- 3 Responses can be spoken, raised hands, or silent thinking.

Keep it short and pressure-free. This is about engagement, not competition.

Calm



Stretch & Reset

Let's do a quick cross-body movement to calm our focus.

- 1 Touch right hand to left knee, then switch.
- 2 Alternate sides 10 times.
- 3 Move at a steady, comfortable pace.

Accuracy matters more than speed. Slow down if students appear unsure.



Shoulder Drop Reset

Let's release tension in our shoulders and neck.

- 1 Lift shoulders toward ears and hold for three seconds.
- 2 Drop shoulders and relax.
- 3 Gently roll shoulders backward once or twice.

Use a calm voice. This works well when students are tired or stressed.