

# **Cool Moves**

## **Quick and easy exercises for small or large spaces**

These movement and exercise activities can be done at any time during the school day, and in some cases at home. You can do the Cool Moves with your class at the start or end of a HEAT Club lesson, or when students have been sitting for long periods of time and you want to help them regain focus. It's important for teachers to understand the activities before doing them to always keep safety in mind.

# Stretching and Strengthening Exercises



## Hug Yourself Stretch

Standing up, students cross their arms and wrap them around their bodies as far as they can stretch. Then they turn the upper body to the right and left. Continue for 20 seconds. They then recross arms so the other arm is on top. Repeat the stretch for 20 seconds.

## Leg Grab

Standing up, students grab (from behind) either the right ankle with the right hand or the left ankle with the left hand and lift the lower leg behind (up) against the buttocks. They should be standing up with back straight and bent knee pointed toward the ground. Hold for 10 seconds. Tell them to switch legs and repeat three times. If they have trouble maintaining balance, they can place their free hands on a desk or wall.



## **Muscle Madness**

Students hold filled water bottles or cans in either the right or left hand and do arms curls. Starting with arms straight and hands at sides, they hold the bottle or can palm up and bend the arm at the elbow, curling the object to shoulder height. Students should exhale on the way up and inhale on the way down. Tell them to do curls for 10 seconds and then to switch arms. Repeat for one minute.

## **Ostrich Stretch**

Students stand with legs straight and bend over at the waist (as far as they can comfortably go) to try to touch their toes (imitating an ostrich sticking its head in the sand). They stay in this position for five seconds. Repeat three to five times. Remind students not to hold their breath or lock their knees during the stretch.

## **Pick the Produce**

Standing up, students reach their right hands above their heads as far as they can to pretend to pick an apple. They place their pretend apples in a pretend basket on the floor to their left. They then repeat with the left hand, placing the pretend apple in a basket on the floor to their right. After a few times, they begin to practice picking a pretend pumpkin off the ground and placing it in a pretend wagon. Tell them to pick apples quickly for 30 seconds and then switch to picking pumpkins for another 30 seconds. To turn this into a game, tell students to count how many apples or pumpkins they can pick in 30 seconds. Other possibilities include picking a coconut with both hands off a palm tree and placing it in a basket or pulling carrots with both hands from the ground and placing them in a basket.

From C. Economos, J. Collins, E. Hennessy, D. Hudson, and L. Marcotte, 2014, *The Healthy Eating and Active Time Club Curriculum* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

# Active Moving Exercises

## Be an Athlete

In this activity, students imitate well-known athletes. When you call out an athlete's name, students mimic a movement from that athlete's sport. Call out athletes who are popular among your students. Emphasize that these athletes achieved their abilities through hard work, lots of practice, and healthy eating. Examples of athletes to choose from include the following:

- Mia Hamm (soccer)—kick a ball
- Michael Phelps (swimming)—move arms in a front-crawl motion
- Ichiro Suzuki (baseball)—swing a bat or catch or throw a ball
- Usain Bolt (runner)—run in place
- LeBron James (basketball)—shoot hoops or jump up for a dunk
- Venus or Serena Williams (tennis)—swing a racket
- Misty May-Treanor (volleyball)—pass, set, and hit a ball
- Tiger Woods (golf)—swing a club
- Tom Brady (football)—throw a pass



From C. Economos, J. Collins, E. Hennessy, D. Hudson, and L. Marcotte, 2014, *The Healthy Eating and Active Time Club Curriculum* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

## **Circles**

Students stand at least an arm's length apart. Instruct students to use slow, gentle motions to avoid injury. Ask them first to move their hands in circles, then their outstretched arms, then one outstretched leg at a time, and finally one foot at a time. Repeat several times, going in both clockwise and counterclockwise directions.

## **Hoop-De-Hoop**

Tell 8 to 10 students to form a circle holding hands. Unclasp the hands of two students, place a hula hoop between them, and reclasp their hands within the hoop. When you call out "hoop de hoop," students pass the hoop around the circle using their bodies (and not their hands) by bending and twisting. Challenge students to try the activity with two hoops of different sizes at once, moving in opposite directions.

## **Jog in Place**

Students pick up their feet and run in place, moving their arms jogging style. To mix it up, vary students' pace. When you say "snail," they jog slowly. When you say "horse," they jog at a medium pace. When you say "cheetah," they jog as quickly as they can.

## Jump Up

Ask students to line up with their backs against a wall. Tell them to raise their right arms and touch the highest part of the wall they can reach with their fingers. While keeping their right arm extended against the wall, they bend their knees, jump up high, and tap the wall with their right fingers. Repeat three or four times. Now ask them to put their right hand at their side so they won't use their arms to help them jump higher. Tell them to bend at the knees and push up with the body and stretch their arms to the sky. They jump five times and then repeat on the left side.



## Knots of Fun

Divide students into teams of six or more, depending on how difficult you want to make the exercise (more students makes the activity more difficult). Tell each student to join right hands with a team member who's *not* standing immediately to his or her left or right. Then tell each student to join left hands with a second team member who's *not* standing immediately to his or her left or right. Now tell teams to untangle themselves without letting go of one another's hands. They might have to loosen their grips a little to allow for twisting and turning. They might also have to step over or under other team members. The first team to untangle their knot is the winner. There are four possible outcomes to the knot (one large circle with students facing either direction, two interlocking circles, a figure eight, or a circle in a circle). Stress the importance of being patient and working together.

From C. Economos, J. Collins, E. Hennessy, D. Hudson, and L. Marcotte, 2014, *The Healthy Eating and Active Time Club Curriculum* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

## **Marching Band**

Standing next to their desks, students march in place. They try high steps, low steps, fast steps, and slow steps. Tell them to use their arms. Do each different style for 20 seconds.

## **Movement Train**

Lead the class in a “train” by having students put their left arms on the left shoulders of the students standing in front of them. Make it interesting by stopping the train and incorporating dips (bend knees), wiggle worms (raise arms overhead and wiggle), bunny hops, and side kicks (both right and left legs). To do this, tell the leader to start a new movement while calling it out loud; tell others to follow the leader. You can reverse the train by having everyone turn around and following a new leader. Another option is to have the last person in the line quickly walk to the front of the line to be the new leader.

## **Popcorn Pop**

Do this activity in an open space where students can spread out and move freely. Tell students they are going to make popcorn. Instruct them to jump up and down slowly. Call out, “Popcorn popping fast!” and tell students to jump faster. Call out, “Popcorn popping slow!” and tell them to jump slower. Call out, “Popcorn kernels are sticking together!” and have students join hands or link arms and twirl around. Finally, call out, “Popcorn finished and in the bowl!” and have students either sit or lie down on the floor (or in their seats).

## **Simon Says**

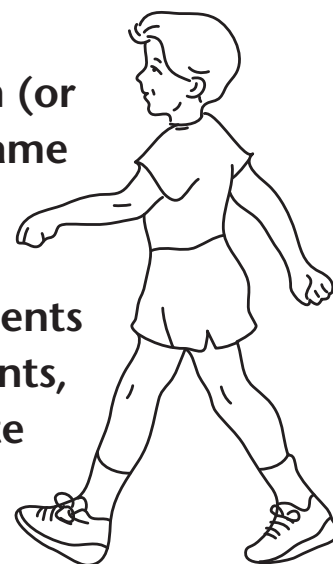
Call out different commands to get students moving; examples include hop on your right foot, jump as high as you can without falling down, run in place, do jumping jacks, and so on. If students follow the command without you saying “Simon Says,” they get one strike. Each student gets three strikes (or more, if you want them to stay active longer) before they are out, so everyone ends up getting exercise.

## **Tableside Dancing**

With music playing softly in the background, students skip in place eight times to the beat of the music. Mix it up by having them hop and march in place. Then ask them to turn slightly to the left and pretend to kick a ball three times with the right foot. Then tell them to do a whole-body shimmy down and up. They then repeat by turning slightly to the right and kicking with the left foot. Once everyone has practiced all the movements, tell them to practice their routines until they can perform them without help. Extend the activity by asking students to come up with new moves to include.

## **Walk and Find**

Students mingle as they walk around the room (or outdoor field). Say, “Find someone with the same color eyes.” Students search to match up with someone with the same eye color. Then say, “Find someone with the same color hair.” Students continue the activity looking for same color pants, shoes, or shirt; same birth month; same favorite color; and so on.





# Simple Yoga Poses and Exercises



## **Ankle, Heel, Toe Walk**

This is a feet exercise. Students start by walking on heels with toes off the ground. They walk around the room, in the hall, or outside. They then try walking on the sides of their feet, and then just on their toes. Our feet need exercise too!

## **Baby Backbend**

This is a back exercise. Students stand tall with feet together. Tell them to breathe in through the nose as they raise their hands overhead, shoulder-distance apart and fingers spread. They breathe out through the nose and squeeze legs tight as they stand tall and strong, reaching fingers to the sky. As they breathe in again, they slowly drop the head back, moving their gaze up to the ceiling, and stretching arms backward. They continue to breathe steadily in and out through the nose. Tell them to keep their backs gently arched and to use their legs for support. Repeat three times.

## **Down Diggity Doggy Down**

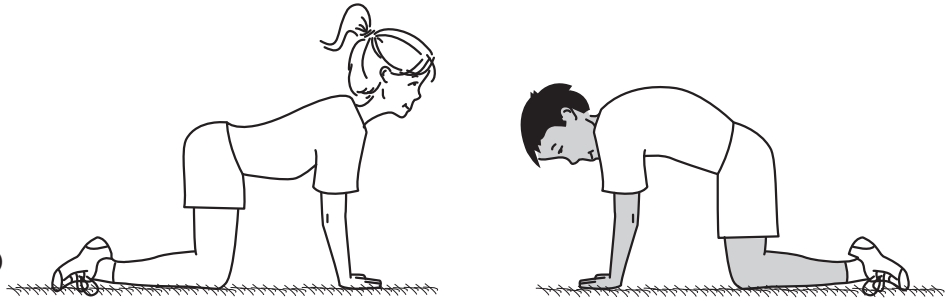
This is a whole-body warm-up. From a standing position, students bend over and place hands on floor about one leg's distance in front of them; hands are about shoulder-width apart; heels are lifted off the ground. Their bodies should be in triangle shapes, with buttocks (puppy tails) lifting into the air. Students stretch their puppy paws (hands and feet) in opposite directions and lift their puppy tails as high as they can. Direct them to take a deep breath in and a long breath out (older students can take several breaths like this). Then they start wagging their puppy tails and barking like dogs (do this several seconds). Next, they lift one puppy leg as high as they can, trying to keep it straight and spreading their toes. They lower that leg and raise the other leg as high as they can, trying to keep it straight and spreading their toes. They then lower their legs and walk their hands in toward their feet; then they roll up very slowly to a standing position.

## **Flamingo**

This is a balance exercise. Students stand tall and shift weight onto one leg. They lift the other leg behind as they bend at the waist. Tell them to bring their arms straight out to the side to create flamingo wings. Advise them to choose a spot on the floor in front of them to focus on to help maintain balance; the focus spot should be 6 to 12 inches (or 15 to 30 cm) out so that the head doesn't drop. Tell them to keep their eyes on the spot they chose and start flapping their wings. Instruct them to try to keep the lifted leg straight and as high as possible. Tell them to lift their hearts to the sky, trying not to let their heads drop as they flap their wings. They should flap 5 to 10 times as they breathe in and out through their nose. Tell them to switch legs and repeat.

From C. Economos, J. Collins, E. Hennessy, D. Hudson, and L. Marcotte, 2014, *The Healthy Eating and Active Time Club Curriculum* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

## **Meow and Moo**



This is a back and hip exercise. On all fours, students inhale, arch their backs like cats, and press down on their hands. At the same time, they lower the head and press chin against the chest. Tell them to exhale as they lift the head and push the spine down until it curves downward, like a cow, and they are looking up (if desired, have them moo as they exhale). Do three sets.

## **Opposite Elbow to Knee, Reverse Hand to Foot**

This is a brain exercise. Students lift the left knee to the right elbow by bending the elbow toward the lifted knee (demonstrate). They switch sides and repeat 5 to 10 times. They then bring the right hand behind the body to meet the left foot. Tell them to switch sides and repeat 5 to 10 times. Students should get a rhythm going. Explain that this exercise is for the brain as well as the body. The left side of the brain controls the right side of the body and vice versa.

## **Shake Like Jelly**

This is a whole-body warm-up. Tell students to shake their right hand, and then their left hand. Next they shake both hands. Then they shake the right foot, and then the left foot. Tell them to try shaking their heads, hips, and arms. Finally, ask them to shake their entire body.

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## **Straight-Back Squat**

This is a hip exercise. Students stand up, bend their legs, and drop their tailbones toward the floor. Tell them to try to keep their backs straight. Make sure feet are flat on the floor and knees do not go past the front of their toes. If they need to, they can flatten their soles to the floor. Tell them to breathe deeply in and out five times; they should focus on straightening the spine on the inhale and dropping the buttocks on the exhale. Tell them to imagine they are as light as frogs on lily pads. Direct them to lift arms over head with the inner arm by the ear and palms facing in (this is called the chair pose).

## **Take 5**

This is a breathing exercise. It is a good exercise for students who need a breather during the school day. It can be done either sitting or standing. Tell students to hold one hand up in a fist beside the head. As they breathe in slowly through the nose, they should open one finger at a time until they are all open. As they breathe out slowly through the nose, they close one finger at a time. Repeat three to five times.

## **Tree**

This is a balance exercise. Students stand with arms at sides and feet shoulder-width apart. Tell them to imagine they have roots coming out of their feet. Students lift the right leg and place the right foot on the inside of the left calf or thigh (not on the knee). Advise them to pick a spot to focus on to help them maintain balance. They then bring the palms together and place them in front of the heart. Tell them to stand tall and strong like a big oak tree. Ask them to take three to five deep breaths. They then raise their limbs (arms) and flutter their leaves (hands) in the wind. Instruct them to switch sides and repeat.

## **Volcano**

This is a breathing exercise. Students stand tall with legs open wide. They bring palms together in front of the heart with fingers pointing upward. They inhale a deep breath. Keeping palms together, they breathe out through the mouth, making a “swooooooooooshshshshing” sound. They lift arms all the way up, and then release palms, fanning arms down to the side. They bring hands back to the start position. Repeat continuously 5 to 10 times. Tell students to let go of any frustration or anger they might have and to feel all the goodness within them rising up to the surface. Note: If students are particularly high in energy, you might want to give them one chance to scream at the top of their lungs as they do the volcano pose.

Descriptions of Ankle, Heel, Toe Walk; Down Diggity Doggy Down; Flamingo; Meow and Moo; Opposite Elbow to Knee; Reverse Hand to Foot; Shake Like Jelly; Take 5; Tree; and Volcano, reprinted, by permission, from yogakids.com. Copyright YogaKids International.

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