



Energy breaks are short (5-minutes or less) tasks that introduce physical activity (that is possible in an overcrowded classroom, probably with rows of student desks, often unmoveable). They also include a few slides that give brain science information in a way that students can easily understand. Most involve language though a few are just physical. They all get the blood moving and refresh students.

There are now 15 on this webpage – just enough for one a week for the semester.

<https://helgesehandouts.weebly.com/energy-breaks1.html>

They are PowerPoints you can download. If it isn't convenient to use PowerPoint in your classroom, you might want to print out the brain science slides as a handout and just direct the students through the activity.

Here are the available Energy Breaks:

Exercise and movement. You can use these in pretty much any order.

- **1-minute exercise routine.** Dr. Wendy Suzuki (Neuroscientist at New York University) leads us through a spirited exercise routine & shares some brain science.
- **Walk and talk.** Just as simple as it sounds. Students, in pairs, stand up and walk around as they talk to each other.
- **Well-balanced students.** In pairs, students stand toe-to-toe. They grasp each other's arms and lean back, balancing off each other. As they do, they talk about an assigned topic (perhaps whatever they have been talking about in class). It introduces the fact that when we sit for 20 minutes, there is a buildup of blood in the feet, lower legs and buttocks. One minute of movement gives a 15% increase of blood and oxygen to the brain.
- **5 right here, right now.** Students identify physical activities they can do in the space of the classroom. Then in pairs, one starts an exercise. The partner mirrors it. When that partner wants to change the exercise, they make a large "X" with their arms. They start a new one. The partner matches. This continues for one minute.
- **Body clocks.** Students imagine their whole bodies are clocks. They pantomime a series of times they do things. Partners guess.
- **Line Up Nonverbally. (#1 & #2).** In small groups, students line up according to the instructions without speaking. They can gesture. Then they speak to check.
- **Positive Peer Neck Massage.** They give each other a standing neck massage in lines or circles. At the same time, they repeat self-selected phrases that good language learners say to themselves, acting as their partner's "innervoice." Note: Make sure you are in an environment where physical contact is appropriate.

Tai Chi. You'll probably want to use these in order, leading up to the last one.

- **TaiChi #1** Introduces Tai Chi and why it is useful. It presents a short (1-minute) routine which students follow. (Thanks to Satsuki MacNeill for this idea).
- **TaiChi #2 and #3.** The Tai Chi routines continue.
- **TaiChi 5-minute routine.** This presents their entire 5-minute routine. You'll probably want to use it after they have done the parts in #1-3.

Songs with actions. (I spread these out throughout the semester.)

- *What a wonderful world.*
- *Don't worry. Be happy.*
- *May you be happy, peaceful, filled with love* (related to "loving kindness"

meditation in song form.)

- The Neuroscience Love Song. From NPR. Challenging, but great, especially around Valentines Day.

Breaks for Kids. A 3-minute set of energy breaks for kids, from Edutopia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx1AtWIUvEw>