

# 15 Second Breaks

This is a list of activities and strategies to use with individual students or with a classroom. These ideas are to provide periodic, brief breaks throughout the school day to keep students alert and awake so they can pay attention.

1. Stand at desk: Put full weight on arms and lift feet off the floor.
2. Sitting in Chair: hold onto sides of chair and lift body up and down.
3. Sitting or standing: push palms of hands together for several seconds then grasp fingers and pull palms apart.
4. Sitting in chair: stretch in different directions.
5. Sitting: hand pushes gently down on head.
6. Suggest the children lightly brush their fingers across their own arms of legs.
7. Curve the fingers and tap the desk as if playing a piano.
8. Push against the wall as if trying to move the wall.
9. Pre-negotiate a specific obstacle course that the child can do and be seen from the classroom. This may be as simple as telling him “when I touch your shoulder, go walk to the closest tree and back, you could use a little break.” Then you can give the child that cue and the permission to take care of himself/herself.
10. Have the whole reading group run a lap before sitting down to read. Or do 5 jumping jacks before doing math, etc.
11. Allow chewy, crunchy, sour, spicy, ice/cold, foods in your classroom for snack breaks of actually during work time.

*Courtesy of Deborah Dougherty-Harris, OTR/L*