

★ Big Idea ★

Incorporating movement into our day even in small ways can be just what we need to help our kids and ourselves get through these long screen-filled days. Research indicates that even just 5 minutes of movement can impact our minds and bodies in dramatic ways. These days, our physical activity might look a little different, and that's okay. If your day seems jam-packed with a lot of competing priorities, we can still make movement a part of our day if we get a little creative. Teachers often use movement or brain breaks to help energize or calm a class down, but movement-based brain breaks aren't just for getting the wiggles out of a restless child. Moving our bodies during the short breaks we have during the day can actually improve brain function and emotional well-being. It doesn't take more than 3 to 5 minutes of physical movement to reboot our brains.

Why It Matters

Movement is especially important for school-aged girls who are more prone to higher levels of stress, anxiety and [perfectionist tendencies](#), and girls who participate in sports or regular physical activity [report higher levels of confidence](#) than girls who aren't physically active. Inserting movement into our day can lead to great benefits — it just takes a little planning.

This is a menu of fun movement-based activities to have on hand to turn any 5-minute break into a boost for your brain, body and mood. Use our tips for setting your family up for success and our example of a Movement Menu to get started.



Tips for Success

1. Put your kids in the driver's seat. Invite your kids to create a Movement Menu with activities they like that can be done in 5 minutes. Create the Movement Menu together and post it somewhere visible.
2. Dress for movement. One advantage of being at home is that we can dress comfortably. If you and your kids are dressed for movement, you will be more likely to take advantage of your Movement Menu.
3. Play! Movement doesn't have to look or feel structured. Make sure your Movement Menu is creative and joyful — not just push-ups and burpees. A competitive game of tag will get your heart rate up in no time.
4. Walk the talk. Be an active participant. It's really tempting to tell our kids to take a movement break while we continue to plug away at the screen. If we want our kids to develop an important self-care habit, we need to set the example.

Example Movement Menu

- ★ One-song workout: Create five exercises and cycle through them for the duration of one of your favorite songs. Freestyle dance party: Choose a favorite song and dance like no one is watching.
- ★ Jump rope challenge: Challenge each other to a jump rope duel.
- ★ The floor is lava: Place pillows, blankets or paper plates on the floor and try to cross the room without touching the floor. Add challenges by skipping, hopping on one foot, or holding a pillow or ball above your head as you move.
- ★ Tag: Set some ground rules and go!
- ★ Keep up: Use a beach ball and see how many times you can hit it back and forth without it touching the ground.
- ★ Character races: Create a character or scenario and race across the room acting it out. For example — race across the room like a baby learning to walk, or a swimmer in shark infested waters, or a frog jumping from lily pad to lily pad.
- ★ Stretch and share: Create a prompt to discuss. This could be a “would you rather” question, a check-in about your day or even discussing an ideal vacation. Select any type of stretch or yoga pose to complete while one person shares their response to the prompt. When it’s time for another person to respond to the prompt, select another stretch or pose to complete while discussing.
- ★ Mirror mirror: Face each other and have a “leader” begin any series of movements. The “followers” try to mirror the movements as they happen.

