



{inclusion outreach}

1031 Lucas Avenue  
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[www.inclusionoutreach.ca](http://www.inclusionoutreach.ca)

## Movement Breaks

Most students benefit from taking movement breaks throughout the school day. Movement breaks have many benefits - they naturally get circulation and breathing going which in turn help the nervous system to regulate. This can improve focused attention, reduce stress, and support the student's availability to learn.



Movement breaks work best when incorporated into the classroom routines for all students, a universal design approach. Micro exercise breaks (2-3 minutes) can be very effective. For younger students it could look like arm circles, wiggling in seat, dancing to music, wall/chair pushups, or standing beside desk and marching on the spot. For older students, simple position changes can be woven in like moving seats to get into groups, coming up to the board, distributing handouts, or gathering supplies for a project.

Students who have more limited voluntary movement benefit from movement breaks and with some creativity most classroom movement break activities can be

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adapted to include all learners. For a wheelchair user this might look like changing places in the room, seated yoga, or extra head, arm, or foot movement.

For a smaller number of students micro breaks alone are not sufficient and additional movement breaks are needed. A short walk within the school, or outdoors can be helpful. Some students might need a more intense burst of exercise like running, jumping, or playing basketball. Sometimes a heavy work task like pushing a library cart, putting books in a bin, or reams of paper on a shelf, or manually propelling their wheelchair can be regulating. Ideally these are activities that a small group can engage in, so the student isn't isolated. It is important to keep these breaks short and purposeful and plan for a smooth re-entry into the classroom before leaving.



For more ideas:

[OT Tool Box Brain Breaks](#)

[Cosmic Kids Yoga Seated Movement and Mindfulness](#)

[Seated Workout for Kids](#)

[Go Noodle on Youtube: breathing and movement videos](#)

[Edutopia Science behind brain breaks](#)

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