

These are designed to help your student's transition and prepare mentally for the lesson. The energizing exercises are great when the kids are either really lethargic or wound up. Always end these with some calming breathes or some other focusing activity.

The relaxation exercises are great when the class is receptive and ready to learn. They will help them learn how to calm themselves.

Energizing Exercises

Simon Says (2-3 minutes)

We're going to play "Simon Says!" When I give you an instruction, follow it only if I say "Simon says." If I don't say "Simon says," and you do it anyway, you are "out" and have to sit down.

(Can play a different way every time, but please follow this basic order)

1. Start with Stretching (reach overhead, lunge, open up into a star, touch your toes, roll your shoulders)
2. Continue with Cardio (jumping jacks, dance in place, run in place, mountain climbers)
3. Pose with Power (hold a pushup/plank pose, stand on one foot/tree pose, squat pose – like sitting on a chair)
4. Close with Calm (close your eyes, breathe through nose, breathe into your low belly, breathe as slowly as you can)

10 Times!

(Get creative with this. Maybe even ask the class for some suggestions)

1. March in place 10 times. Bring your knees up high!
2. Keeping your feet together hop from side to side 10 times.
3. Touch your shoulders, knees, then toes then jump as high as you can. Do 10 times.
4. Keep your feet still and twist at your waist first to your left then to your right. Do 10 times.
5. Lie on your stomach and push up with your arms while keeping your hips on the ground. Hold for ten seconds.
6. Sit with your legs crossed and breath in for a count of 4 and out for a count of 5. Repeat ten times.

Animal Exercises

1. 5 Frog Jumps – Squat down on the ground and then jump as high as you can
2. 5 Crab Dips– Sit on your bottom and put your arms behind your bottom and push up onto your hands and feet. Bend arms and then straighten.
3. 10 Bunny Bounces – Stand with feet together, knees slightly bent and elbows bent with hands by your chest. Hop on your right foot 10 times, and then hop on your left foot 10 times.
4. 30 Second Flamingo Stand – Place palms together in front of your chest with your fingers pointed up. Bend one leg up and hold for 30 seconds. Now let us do the other leg.
5. 6 Cat Stretches – Get on your hands and knees. Push your back up to the sky as high as you can and bring your head down without moving your arms and legs. Then bring your back down and push your stomach to the ground while bringing your head up without moving your arms and legs. (Repeat 2 times)

Silly Sidewalk (Do as many different moves as you have time for)

1. Have class split into two or three groups depending on how much free space you have.
2. You will need a clear aisle for each group that runs the length of the room or some distance greater than 15 feet.
3. Have each team line up in front of an aisle. (Alternatively, this can be a relay race-- just break the teams in half and have them tag out on each crossing.)
4. Each team member is going to go to the other end of the aisle and back in whatever silly ways you choose. Start with skipping or something else simple and then start to make it more difficult. Some Examples (but you can make your own) include:
Fast walking, running, marching with high knees, marching with “thriller” arms
Skipping, Jumping, Jumping with high knees, hopping on one foot
Crab walking, somersaulting, rolling (forward or sideways)
Leaping like a frog, crawling with belly as low to the ground as possible
5. Let everyone go through one movement before moving to the next so that you can demonstrate if anyone is unfamiliar.

Dance Party

(Use whatever happy, bouncy music you would prefer! Only use ~ 3 minutes of music to avoid burnout.)

Let's make a dance party into a game! I'm going to start some fun music, and everybody dance however you want. But make sure to listen, because when I say “freeze!” everyone has to hold very, very still! I'll then say “dance!” and you can go back to it. Anyone who doesn't freeze is “out” and has to do 30 jumping jacks and then sit down.

Statue Garden - (this takes longer... about 8-10 minutes. Could be a fun way to end a shorter lesson)

Let's play a fun game where we pretend to be beautiful statues.

Each of you will be both a sculptor and a statue! The person on the far left of the line will be the first "statue" and the person to his or her right will be the "sculptor." The sculptor will put the statue in a position and the statue has to hold that position until the very end-- if a statue moves, that person is "out." The game is over when I pose the final statue and he/she holds that position for ten seconds.

Six-Directional Spine Stretch (1-2 minutes)

(This yoga sequence opens the spine in all 6 major directions. You'll want to explain it all the way the first iteration, then simply say inhale/exhale while demonstrating for the second iteration. This is great with medium-speed music.)

1. Stand up straight, shoulders back, breathing down into the low belly. Relax.
2. Place right hand on right hip, elbow pointing back, shoulder open in the front.
INHALE left arm up-- reach for the sky!
EXHALE left arm reaches to the right, over the head. Streeeetch.
3. INHALE right arm up, both arms reach for the sky!
EXHALE to reach behind you, pelvis presses forward as hands reach back
4. INHALE to rise back up, reaching for the sky.
EXHALE left hand down to left hip, elbow pointing back, shoulder open in the front.
4. INHALE lengthen right side
EXHALE right arm reaches to the left, over the head. Streeeetch.
5. INHALE left arm back up, both arms reach overhead
EXHALE bend knees, fold at hips down and to the right;
Right hand to sacrum, Left hand to right calf
6. INHALE to rise up, Right arm reaching up, left hand to left hip.
EXHALE to twist the body, from the belly button upward only, to the left.
7. INHALE bring the hands to the heart in prayer position
EXHALE bend knees, fold at hips down and to the left;
Left hand to sacrum, Right hand to left calf
8. INHALE to rise up, Left arm reaching up, right hand to right hip.
EXHALE to twist the body, from the belly button upward only, to the right.
9. INHALE to bring the hands to the heart in prayer position
EXHALE to relax the hands down, standing quietly.
10. REPEAT the above sequence, this time with the rhythm of the breath.

Cat, Cow, Frog

Cow and Cat

1. Come to all fours.
2. INHALE into Cow: drop the belly, lift the crown of the head up, looking gently upward.
3. EXHALE into Cat: lift the belly button to the sky while rounding the back as the crown of the head points downward.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 with the pace of the breath, let students do it alone 7-10 times.

Frog

1. Stand on toes with feet hip-width apart.
2. INHALE: Slowly release down into a squat,
 - a. bringing fingertips to the floor just below shoulders,
 - b. let belly release down, shoulders back, open the heart forward
3. EXHALE: Stay on toes, keep fingertips on the floor, and let knees be slightly bent
 - a. as you press upward into a hanging forward fold
 - b. lift the belly button to the sky while rounding the back
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 with the pace of the breath. Let students do it alone 7-10 times.

Cat, Cow, Crab

Cat/Cow

1. Come to all fours.
2. INHALE into Cow: drop the belly, lift the crown of the head up, looking gently upward.
3. EXHALE into Cat: lift the belly button to the sky while rounding the back as the crown of the head points downward.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 with the pace of the breath, let students do it alone 7-10 times.

Crab

1. Sit on floor with legs straight out in front.
2. Place feet flat on the floor with the knees gently bent.
3. Place hands on floor on either side of the hips. fingers face forward.
4. Move hands backward one hand-length.
5. Press down through the knuckle of where the fingers meet the hand.
6. INHALE:
 - a. Press down through the feet and lift pelvis straight up as high as it can go.
 - b. Knees are bent at a 90 degree angle.
 - c. Open the heart as you lift the belly and pelvis.
7. EXHALE:
 - a. Draw the pelvis back toward a seated position, but hover above the ground.
 - b. Release the head forward and shoot the back of the heart toward the wall behind you.
8. Repeat Steps 6 and 7 with the pace of the breath. Let students do it alone 7-10 times.

Relaxation Exercises

Breathing through the Nose

Let's take a few minutes to wake up our bodies! We will do this by being very still so that we can really pay attention to what is going on around and inside us. (Seated on floor, sitting up straight) We're going to play with our breath and see if we can become more relaxed. Everyone have a seat on the floor, nice and straight, with your heart facing me. (wait) Great! Let's start.

Close your eyes, sit up straight, and relax all of the muscles of your face. Now begin to sloooowly breathe through your nose. Imagine that the air you are breathing is the most beautiful purple mist going in and out through your nose. Now watch the purple move in and out right at the tip of your nose. You can play with making the breath more relaxed; one way is to watch the purple mist flow in and out like gentle waves on a beach. Let's count 5 more sloooow breaths in our minds--- and when you're done, breathe however you want.

(wait for 30 seconds)

Notice how you are breathing now. Is it different than before? Notice how you feel.

Did breathing through your nose change your feelings?

Now you can blink a few times and open your eyes.

Three Part Breath

Let's notice the different places we breathe. You can breathe at the top, middle, or bottom.

Let's learn about the top-- place your hand over your heart-- now move it to the center. Breathe into your hand. As you breathe in, make space, like you're filling up a balloon. As you breathe out, let the balloon deflate-- don't try very hard at all. Notice how you feel. (wait 15 -30 seconds)

Now let's find the breath in the middle. Place your hand on your lower back. Now breathe into your hand like you're filling up a balloon. Notice how you feel. (wait 15 - 30 seconds)

Now let's find the breath at the bottom. Place your hand over your low belly. Now breathe into your hand sloooowly like you're filling up a balloon. Notice how you feel. (wait 15 - 30 seconds)

Now let's put them together-- try breathing from bottom to middle to top and then breathing out through the bottom. Relax and let the breath flow like water so you can really feel where it is going.

(wait 15 seconds)

Now you can blink as you open your eyes.

How do you feel?

Most people find breathing into the middle or the bottom to be very relaxing. Which kind of breathe made you feel the most relaxed?

Well, the best part about breathing to feel better is that you can do it whenever you want... you breathe all day long! If you take the time to breathe bigger and slower breaths, you will get more oxygen, which helps you feel happier and be more active!

Lower Body Relaxation

Let's focus on relaxing just the lower part of our body. Lie down completely flat and start to breathe gently through your nose all the way down into your lower belly. Let's see how effortless you can allow your breath to be!

(wait 30 seconds for students to begin to breathe...)

Now let's begin to relax different parts of our lower body, starting with the left foot. As you breathe in, imagine your left foot is surrounded by a beautiful ball of white light. The light expands and softens your foot, relaxing it completely. As you breathe out, watch the white light dissolve away, leaving your foot completely relaxed.

(wait 10 seconds)

While you let your toes continue to relax, focus on your left ankle. As you breathe in, imagine a ball of white light around your ankle that expands and softens it. As you breathe out, watch the white light dissolve away, leaving your ankle completely relaxed.

(wait 10 seconds)

Now focus on the left lower leg-- the calf and the shin. Use your breathe and the white light to relax your left lower leg.

(wait 10 seconds)

Now I'm going to just say the name of the next body part and let you do the breathing on your own.

Left knee **(wait 10 seconds)**

Left thigh **(wait 10 seconds)**

Left hip. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Lower belly. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Right hip. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Right thigh. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Right knee. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Right lower leg. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Right ankle. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Right foot. **(wait 10 seconds)**

Now allow your entire lower body to relax even more deeply, continuing your deep belly breathing in and out through your nose. Notice how you are breathing-- can you let the breath be even more relaxed-- more effortless? We'll stay here for another 30 seconds-- let's see how quiet we can let our minds be now that our bodies are quiet.

(wait 30 seconds)

Now you can gently blink as you open your eyes, roll over to your right, and push yourselves up to a seated position.

Full Body Relaxation

Let's focus on relaxing our whole body part by part. We'll relax the whole body like an elevator, moving from the bottom to the top. Lie down completely flat and start to breathe gently through your nose all the way down into your lower belly. Let's see how effortless you can allow your breath to be.

(wait 15 - 30 seconds for students to begin to breathe...)

Now let's begin to relax different parts of our lower body, starting with the toes. As you breathe in, imagine your toes are surrounded by a beautiful ball of white light. The light expands and softens your toes, relaxing them completely. As you breathe out, watch the white light dissolve away, leaving your toes completely relaxed.

(wait 10 seconds)

While you let your toes continue to relax, focus on your ankles. As you breathe in, imagine a ball of white light around your ankles that expands and softens them. As you breathe out, watch the white light dissolve away, leaving your toes and ankles-- your whole foot-- completely relaxed.

(wait 10 seconds)

Now focus on the lower legs-- the calves and the shins. Use your breath and the white light to relax your lower legs.

(wait 10 seconds)

Now I'm going to just say the name of the next body part and let you do the breathing on your own.

Knees.	(wait 10 seconds)
Thighs.	(wait 10 seconds)
Sitting bones.	(wait 10 seconds)
Rest of hips.	(wait 10 seconds)
Lower belly.	(wait 10 seconds)
Middle belly.	(wait 10 seconds)
Chest.	(wait 10 seconds)
Fingertips.	(wait 10 seconds)
Wrists.	(wait 10 seconds)
Lower arms.	(wait 10 seconds)
Elbows.	(wait 10 seconds)
Upper arms.	(wait 10 seconds)
Shoulders.	(wait 10 seconds)
Neck.	(wait 10 seconds)
Lips.	(wait 10 seconds)
Eyes.	(wait 10 seconds)
Ears.	(wait 10 seconds)
Whole Face.	(wait 10 seconds)
Back of head.	(wait 10 seconds)

Now allow your entire lower body to relax even more deeply, continuing your deep belly breathing in and out through your nose. Notice how you are breathing-- can you let the breath be even more relaxed-- more effortless? We'll stay here for another 30 seconds-- let's see how quiet we can let our minds be now that our bodies are quiet.

Now you can gently blink as you open your eyes, roll over to your right, and push yourselves up to a seated position.