

Brain Breaks

What is this BILATERAL nonsense?

The human body is bilateral - which means that there is a left side and a right side. Both sides have to work efficiently by themselves as well as together. In order for the sides to work together, the brain must receive information from both sides and **INTEGRATE** them to get a “whole body” picture.

Kids These Days....

Kids today are involved in very few activities (besides walking and running) that emphasize alternating bilateral motion. Instead, kids do many activities that are one-sided (moving a mouse, holding an iPhone). When they do use two sides, the tasks do not involve **REAL** movement or coordination (using a game controller).

What These Brain Breaks Do

The attached brain breaks include movements that **COORDINATE** not only the left side with the right side; but the top half with the bottom half **AND** the front half with the back half. Having the child go through these movements in a **SLOW, CONTROLLED** fashion wakes up the brain, forces the sides of the brain to communicate with each other and has multiple biomechanical and physiological effects (enhances posture; facilitates ocular motor skills; changes neurotransmitter levels for alertness and organization - just to name a few).

When To Do These Brain Breaks

Brain breaks can be done in a small group or large group fashion. They are best performed **BEFORE** a concentration task or **AS A BREAK** during a length assignment (i.e. at 20-30 minute intervals).

Rules of Brain Breaks

1. **DO IT SLOooOOooOOW!** It is not about speed, it is about the accuracy of having the planes of the body communicate and connect.
2. **USE VERBAL CUES** to enhance accuracy. (i.e. “Right hand, left knee!”)
3. **DO HAND OVER HAND** for younger students to help them understand how to move their bodies if needed.
4. For younger students, if balancing is too difficult, try doing it in a chair first.

Quiet Jack

This BRAIN BREAK makes the TOP HALF and BOTTOM HALF and LEFT SIDE and RIGHT SIDE communicate.

Position:

- Stand upright
- Put your legs shoulder width apart
- Keeping your legs straight, bend forward at the hips to place your right hand on your left foot.
- Come back up
- Keeping your legs straight, bend forward at the hips to place your left hand on your right foot.
- Repeat this motion 5-10 times

Key Points:

- Make sure the child's legs straight DO NOT BEND THE KNEES.
- Make sure the child is touching the ALTERNATE foot



CROSS CRAWL

This BRAIN BREAK makes the TOP HALF and BOTTOM HALF and LEFT SIDE and RIGHT SIDE communicate.

Position:

- Stand upright
- Put your legs shoulder width apart
- Bring your right knee up while bringing your left elbow downward to touch your right knee.
- Place your feet back on the floor.
- Bring your left knee up while bringing your right elbow downward to touch your left knee.
- Come back up
- Repeat this motion 5-10 times

Key Points:

- Make sure ELBOW is touching the KNEE at midline.
- Make sure the child is touching the ALTERNATE foot.



THE SKITTER

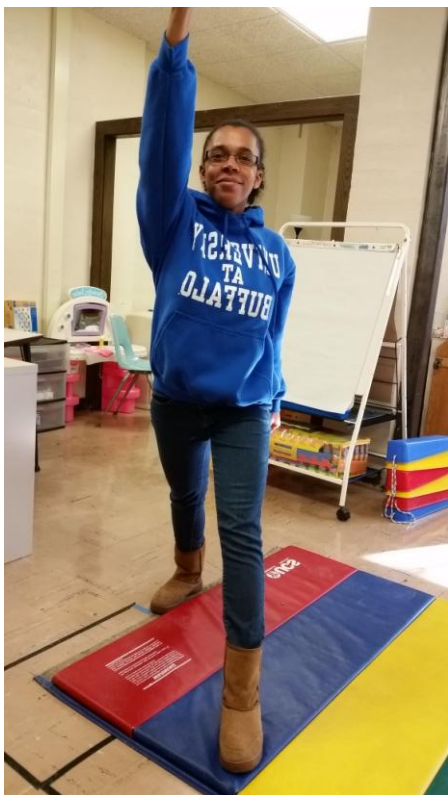
This BRAIN BREAK makes the TOP HALF and BOTTOM HALF, the FRONT SIDE and BACK SIDE and the LEFT SIDE and RIGHT SIDE communication.

Position:

- Stand upright
- Put your left leg forward in front of your body
- Raise your right arm out in front of your body
- Hold that position for a second or two.
- JUMP TO SWITCH so that your right leg comes forward in front of your body and your left arm raises in front of your body.
- Repeat this motion 5-10 times

Key Points:

- DO THIS SLOW
- Make sure the alternate arm/leg is forward and NOT THE SAME SIDE.
- Make sure the child is touching the ALTERNATE foot.



BACKWARDS CROSS CRAWL

This BRAIN BREAK makes the TOP HALF and BOTTOM HALF, the FRONT SIDE and BACK SIDE and the LEFT SIDE and RIGHT SIDE communication.

Position:

- Stand upright
- Pick up your left foot to bring it behind your back WHILE simultaneously reaching behind your back with your right arm so that you touch your left foot with your right hand.
- Put your foot down
- Pick up your right foot to bring it behind your back WHILE simultaneously reaching behind your back with your left arm so that you touch your right foot with your left hand.
- Put your foot down
- Repeat this motion 5-10 times

Key Points:

- Stay upright, do not bend forward.
- Make sure the child is putting both arms and legs BEHIND them.
- Make sure the child is touching the ALTERNATE foot.

