



OPTIONS CENTER EDUCATION TOPIC

Brain Gym® Exercises for MATH



In order to improve math skills, a student must be able to internalize concepts about space, mass, quantities, and relationships between numbers and symbols. Five Brain Gym® activities can be used especially for improving math skills.

The Elephant [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 8] is performed by first bending the knees and resting the right ear to the right shoulder as the shoulder is raised. Point the index finger of the right hand. Use your ribs and abdomen to move your whole upper body as you trace a Lazy 8. The student may also trace times tables or anything else s/he may be trying to memorize. While tracing, the student can say aloud what s/he is tracing in the air. Repeat with other arm. The Elephant helps relax the neck, shoulders, and eyes. It is also effective at helping the student learn and remember facts and numbers because it integrates all three modes of learning (visual, auditory, kinesthetic).



The Owl [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 17] also increases relaxation while studying. The directions for The Owl are the following: 1) Grasp the right shoulder with your left hand and squeeze the muscles firmly. 2) Turn your head to look back over the right shoulder. 3) Breathe deeply and pull both shoulders back. 4) Turn your head to look over the left shoulder, opening the shoulders again. 5) Drop your chin to your chest and breathe deeply, letting all neck and shoulder muscles relax. 6) Repeat with left hand squeezing right shoulder. Variations of The Owl include making a "whooooing" sound while exhaling and doing the head turns while a partner massages the student's neck and shoulder muscles. The Owl relieves any tension while performing mathematical calculations and helps with memorization.



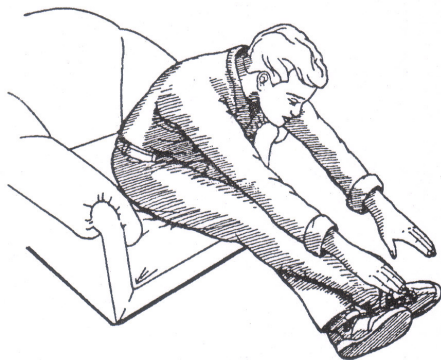
The Calf Pump [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 20] is a lengthening exercise which is done by first supporting yourself with your hands on



a wall or back of a chair, leaning forward on the right leg and exhaling. Press the left heel gently to the ground. As you release, lift your heel up and take a deep breath. Repeat three times with each leg in front. The more you bend the forward knee, the more lengthening you feel in the back of the calf. The Calf Pump helps increase attention span and enhances the student's ability to communicate and respond to a problem or situation

Neck Rolls [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 9] are done by allowing the head to roll slowly from side to side as s/he breathes deeply. Variations include rolling the neck with the eyes open and closed and rolling the shoulders in addition to the head. Neck Rolls release tension in the neck and shoulder area which then improves breathing and allows the student to become relaxed while studying.

The Gravity Glider [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 21] is another lengthening activity. The Gravity Glider improves balance and coordination. It also increases attention span and breathing depth. The Gravity Glider also helps the student while doing arithmetic and abstract thinking.



Source: Cox, Helen K. and Blaine Patino. *Alternative Health Care, Space Age Interpretations of Age-Old Truths*, M. Press. 1994. pg 139.

Bibliography:

Dennison, Paul and Dennison, Gail. *Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*. Ventura, CA: Edu-Kinesthetics, Inc. 1994.

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