



OPTIONS CENTER EDUCATION TOPIC



WRITING ACTION BALANCE

Easy-to-read handwriting requires good hand-eye coordination. The following Brain Gym® activities improve penmanship and cursive writing. These exercises also improve gross-motor movement, handedness, and fine-motor control, all of which allow the writer to communicate effectively through writing.

The first exercise is **The Energy Yawn** [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 29], which is performed by placing your fingertips against any tight or tender spots on the jaw. Make a deep, relaxed, yawning sound and gently rub away the tension. The Energy Yawn is done to relax the throat so the voice can be stronger.

Arm Activation [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 18] is a lengthening exercise performed using the following directions: 1) Hold your right arm up next to your ear using your left hand. 2) Exhale gently while activating the muscles by pushing the arm against the left hand in four directions (front, back, in, and away from the ear). 3) Repeat with left arm up being held by the right hand. Arm Activation can also be done with a partner. The teacher stands behind the student (who is sitting or standing) and activates each of the student's arms in all four directions (away from head, forward, backward, and toward the ear). The student can exhale on the exertion (or activation stage) and inhale in the resting stage. Arm Activation improves gross-motor and fine-motor skills by lengthening the muscles of the upper chest and shoulders. This in turn improves handwriting. Arm Activation also increases attention span and focus for written work, improves breathing and relaxed attitude, and enhances the student's ability to express ideas.

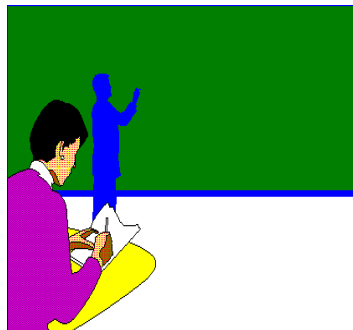
Double Doodle [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 6] is performed by drawing with both hands at the same time in all directions (out, in, up, down, left, right, horizontally). Double Doodle exercises improve hand-eye coordination, spatial awareness, and body awareness all of which improve handwriting skills.

The next exercise, **Alphabet 8s** [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 7], are performed by fitting or superimposing each lower case letter of the alphabet into its place in a large Lazy 8. Alphabet 8s integrates the movements involved in making letters, increases eye-hand coordination, and fine-motor skills including handwriting, spelling, cursive writing, and creative writing. Alphabet 8s exercises also improve concentration while writing and relax the muscles of the eyes, neck, shoulders, and wrists while writing.

The Energizer [*Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*, p. 14]. Bend elbows. Tilt head back and try to touch elbows together; hold 6-8 seconds, reverse by putting head down. Do three sets.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Dennison, Paul and Dennison, Gail. *Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition Revised*.
Ventura, CA: Edu-Kinesthetics, Inc. 1994.
Dennison, Paul, Ph.D. and Dennison, Gail, *Brain Gym® Handbook, Second Edition*.
Ventura, CA: Edu-Kinesthetics, Inc., 1997. p.17.



Ideas on Fine Motor Activities

From Carla Hannaford's Physiology Workshop given June, 2003 in Peoria

- A. Sit on your hands while you talk.**
- B. Put hands on floor and crawl, feel the hands roll out.**
- C. While holding/touching the carpal tendons, print a sentence, then write in cursive a sentence. See the difference while printing and writing. Notice any stress.**

D. Write with right hand.

Write with left hand.

Do Lazy 8.

Write with right hand.

Write with left hand.

Notice the difference.



E. Use two identical papers

1. Roll up each paper in separate hands at the same time
2. Unroll each paper in separate hands at the same time
3. Tear papers into 8 pieces
4. Put in two piles
5. Roll up into tiny balls at the same time
6. Flick the tiny balls out using index, middle, etc. fingers using both hands
7. Pick up the tiny balls with the toes. Put in opposite hand.
8. Pick up with toes and toss in wastebasket

F. Writing Balance

Pre activity

1. Write, "Today is Saturday." with dominant hand
2. Write, "Today is Saturday." with non dominant hand
3. Write for 45 seconds an essay about summer
4. Menu
 - a. Write Lazy 8 making sure x is in the midline with dominant, non-dominant hands, both extending thumb, with fingers fluttering/flickering. [If very young, do Lazy 8 on floor, then on board or wall.] Breathe and blink. Educator holds finger and taps when student loses it.
 - b. Massage and compress each finger up in its socket
 - c. Massage arms
 - d. Double doodle on back of person in front of you

Post activity

5. Write, "Today is Saturday." with dominant hand
6. Write, "Today is Saturday." with non dominant hand
7. Write for 45 seconds an essay about summer
8. Notice the difference

G. Student writes a story [just scribbling], student reads story to educator.

1. Educator says to student you really like [names the topic].
2. Would you like to see how I write [names the topic]?
3. Educator writes the [topic]

4. Student writes [topic] over and over again with the scribbles.
5. Student tells friend story while friend reads story.
6. Friend then learns how to read/write [topic].

H. Finger puppets for teaching communicating.



I. Finger play

1. Mouse runs in forest [down arms], esp. in tall trees [fingers]
2. Here comes a cat [thump hand on arm]
3. Here comes wind [sweeping motion on arms]
4. Here comes rain [tapping motion on arms]
5. So the mouse runs to another forest [legs]
6. Here comes the cat [thump hand on arm]
7. Here comes the wind [sweeping motion on arms]
8. Here comes the rain [tapping motion on arms]
9. And it gets so soggy the mouse runs home [hands clasped at heart].

J. Group in a circle, leader starts and the same movement goes all around circle till leader starts the next sequence.

1. Rub hands
2. Click fingers
3. Clap hands
4. Slap thighs
5. Raise hand
6. Raise arm
7. Slide hands together



Source of drawing: Unknown

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