



American  
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## Be Ready to Learn

# Sound the Alarm

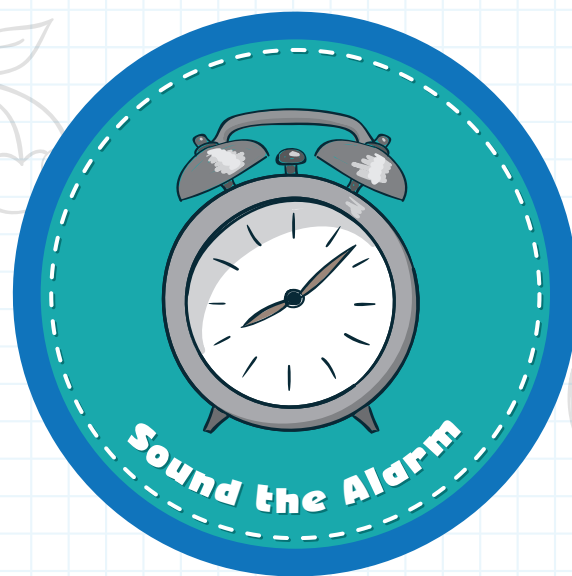
Announce this brain booster activity with the press of a buzzer, ring of a bell or sound of a phone alarm. Students hop from their chairs and complete a “Wake Up!” dance. Start with a four-part sequence such as stomp left, jump twice, spin in a circle and fist-bump a classmate. Repeat the sequence two more times. Follow up with a second four-part dance sequence such as stomp right, jump twice, touch your toes and elbow-bump a classmate. Repeat this sequence two more times then perform the two sequences together. Tell students they might want to try this dance first thing in the morning to wake up!



## Just for Fun

Share these unusual sleeping habits of animals in the wild:

- Meerkats pile on top of one another!
- Ducks often sleep side-by-side in a row. The duck on each end of the row keeps one eye open to watch for danger.
- A giraffe sleeps only about 30 minutes a day — five minutes at a time. Usually, a giraffe sleeps standing up. Sometimes it sits down and rests its head on its back.



## Quick Fact to Share

A lack of sleep makes it difficult to pay attention in school. Stay alert and ready to learn all day by getting a good night's sleep and eating a nutritious breakfast.



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## Move More

# Mix It Up

During this activity break, students act out opportunities for staying active. Use your phone alarm or set a secret timer for 15 seconds. Choose games such as basketball, baseball, four square, tennis, golf and dodgeball along with physical activities such as jumping rope, boxing, karate kicks and flying a kite. Call out a game or activity and tell students they should “play” the game or activity until the timer goes off. Then announce one more.



## Just for Fun

Compare the weight of the human heart (less than one pound) to the average weight of other organs in the human body. If you have a scale in your classroom, you can even compare it to the weight of classroom materials, such as a stapler, book or lunchbox.

- Lungs — about 5 pounds or 2½ pounds per lung
- Intestines — about 7½ pounds
- Liver — slightly more than 3 pounds
- Brain — about 3 pounds



## Quick Fact to Share

Your heart is the hardest-working muscle in your body, yet it weighs less than one pound. Staying active is great for your heart. It's also great for your bones and brain.

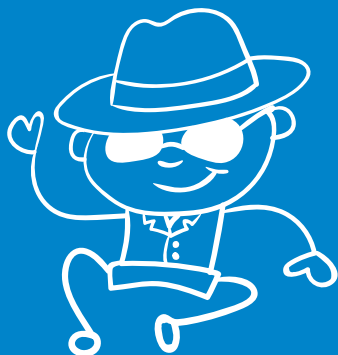


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## Know Your Heart

# Gettin' Silly!

Get students on their feet and moving around while impersonating characters. Instruct students to pretend to be spies, clowns, superheroes, rock stars, runway models or champion athletes. They'll stretch their bodies and imaginations!



## Just for Fun

Bring on the laughs! Join students in mimicking a variety of styles including chuckles, cackles, giggles, belly laughs and more.

# HA HA HA



## Quick Fact to Share

Laughing is good for your heart. It can reduce stress and give a boost to your immune system. The effects of a good laugh can last for 24 hours.



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## Eat Plenty of Fruits and Veggies

# Harvest Time!

Re-energize students with this brain-boosting version of Simon Says called “Farmer Says.” Take on the role of the farmer. Remind the group that they are to perform only instructions that begin with “Farmer says...” When a player moves without hearing “Farmer says,” he or she can “undo” the movement by hopping two times and immediately rejoining the game.

### Possible game phrases:

- Pick apples (*oranges, grapefruits, peaches, pears, bananas*) high in the trees.
- Dig for potatoes (*sweet potatoes*).
- Pick grapes (*blackberries, raspberries, blueberries*) as fast as you can.
- Pick the largest watermelon (*cucumber, squash*) in the patch.
- Pull carrots (*radishes, beets*) out of the ground.



## Just for Fun

Entertain students with these surprising facts about fruits and veggies:

- A banana is actually a type of berry.
- Apples, pears, peaches and cherries are part of the rose family.
- Corn is a member of the grass family.
- Potatoes were the first food grown in space.



## Quick Fact to Share

Vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, protein, calcium and fiber in fruits and vegetables protect you from heart-related illnesses. Regularly eating a diet that's full of fruits and vegetables can also improve brain power.



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## Reduce Salt Intake

# Shake it OUT!

This fun movement activity reminds students to shake extra salt OUT of their diets! Have students remain seated. Holding their arms out in front of them, instruct students to shake their right arms two times, their left arms two times, their right legs two times, their left legs two times, and their heads two times. Then mix it up and speed it up. Right arm three times, left foot five times, head one time, and so on. Finish giving extra salt the shake with the chant below.



## Just for Fun

Student-created motions make this lively chant even more fun. Call out a line and have students repeat it, or post the words on the board to perform the chant together.

- 1, 2, 3, 4 — kick extra salt out the door!
- 5, 6, 7, 8 — get salty food off your plate.
- 9, 10, 11, 12 — keep the shaker on the shelf!
- We are salt detectives.
- We look for salty clues.
- When we find extra salt
- We know what to do!



## Quick Fact to Share

Eating too much salt makes your heart work harder. On average, people ages 2 to 19 eat about double the amount of sodium the American Heart Association recommends. The foods that contribute the most sodium are pizza, burritos & tacos, sandwiches, breads & rolls, cold cuts & cured meats and soups.



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## Help Others

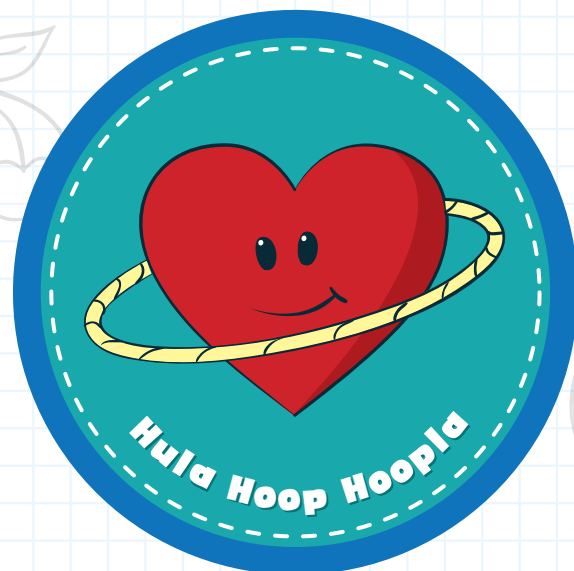
# Hula Hoop Hoopla

Show students that helping others is both good for their hearts and loads of fun! Have students form a circle, holding hands. Ask two students to let go of their grip, place their hands through the hoop, then hold hands again. Explain that the goal of this game is to get the hula hoop around the circle without anyone letting go of their teammates' hands. Students will need to wiggle and slide their bodies through the hoop and work together to succeed. Follow up by inviting students to share how help from their teammates simplified the task, and challenge them to complete the task in record time.



## Just for Fun

Establish Good Words Wednesday in your class. Each Wednesday invite students to use free time during morning work, recess or when they've completed activities to make cards for residents of a local nursing home, patients in the pediatric ward of a hospital or a local veterans' group. These cards are also a thoughtful way to recognize the contributions of office staff, custodians and food service employees.



## Quick Fact to Share

Helping others can reduce stress, sadness and anger, all of which have negative effects on the body — including the heart.





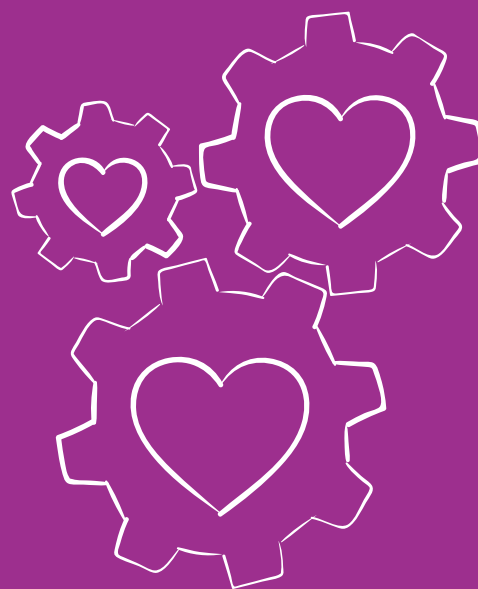
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## Move More

# Heart Tune Up

Tune up your students' hearts and give their brains a boost with this sequence of simple yoga moves.

1. With your feet shoulder-width apart, reach your arms out to the sides and lift them to the sky. Relax and lower your arms. Repeat.
2. With your feet spread apart, twist your body to the right and then twist your body to the left. Gently swing your arms as you twist. Repeat.
3. Bring your feet together. Lift up onto your tiptoes and reach your fingers to the sky. Repeat.
4. Keeping your feet together, round your back, bend your knees and sweep your fingertips just above the floor. Repeat.



## Just for Fun

Have each student work with a partner. Challenge the pairs to create heart-shaped poses using their arms, legs, and bodies.



## Quick Fact to Share

Practicing yoga a couple of times a week is a great way to tune up your heart, lungs and blood vessels. Yoga also strengthens your body and helps you focus.

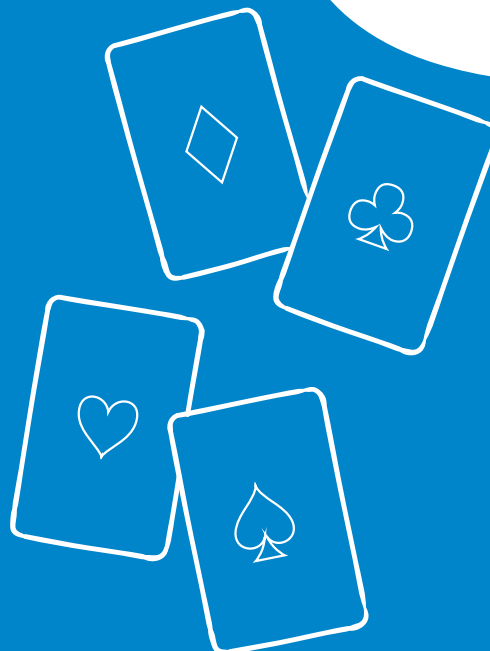


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## Be Kind

# Pass It On

Passing on random acts of kindness is lots of fun using the cards created in the “Just for Fun” section. Post a key that features a different action for each card suit. Have the group form a circle and hand each student a playing card. To begin play, instruct students to perform the actions that correspond to the suits on their cards. After 10 or 15 seconds, say “Pass it on!” Students then pass their cards to classmates on their right. Play continues as described. Keep the pace steady and add to the fun by occasionally interjecting a “Double (or triple) pass it on!”



## Just for Fun

Hand out blank index cards. Have about one-fourth of the class draw and color a red heart on their cards. Repeat for each remaining card suit. Then ask students to write a message of kindness on the blank side of their card. Collect the cards so they can be used during games of “Pass It On.”



## Quick Fact to Share

Kindness strengthens your heart — physically and emotionally. Being kind to others can reduce stress and anxiety. It also fosters friendships. These factors can lessen your risk of heart disease.





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## Know Your Heart

# The Beat Goes On

Fun, high-energy activities are sure to get hearts beating and blood flowing. Have students stand. Show them a series of movements, such as 10 high knees, five forward lunges, 10 star jumps and five squats. Then challenge students to complete the sequence as many times as possible in one minute. Ready, set, go!



## Just for Fun

Get students pumped up about hearts with these fascinating facts.

- A human heart weighs less than one pound. A giraffe's heart weighs about 26 pounds — powerful enough to pump blood up the animal's long neck. The heart of a blue whale weighs about 400 pounds.
- A human heart is about the size of a fist. A cow's heart is about the size of a human head.
- An octopus has three hearts.



## Quick Fact to Share

Your heart pumps blood through four chambers. Before blood leaves each chamber, it passes through a valve. The valve opens and shuts to let blood through. The sound of your heartbeat (lub-DUB, lub-DUB) is the opening and closing of these valves.



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## Move More

# Fitness Jam

A familiar holiday tune increases the fun of this action-packed brain booster. Tell students you have 12 actions for them to perform to the tune “The 12 Days of Christmas.” Lead students in completing the first several actions, adding a few new ones each day.



On my [first] day of fitness, my teacher gave to me...”

- 1 stork stand
- 2 toe touches
- 3 muscle poses
- 4 jumping ropes (imaginary ropes)
- 5 forward lunges
- 6 half squats
- 7 boxer bounces
- 8 raise the roofs
- 9 high knees
- 10 side stretches
- 11 arm circles
- 12 jumping jacks

## Just for Fun

Have students create their versions of “The 12 Days of Fitness.” Provide a sign-up sheet for students to sign up to present their fitness routines to the class during learning breaks.



## Quick Fact to Share

Your heart is a muscle, and like any muscle, exercise strengthens it. To keep your heart strong, most of your 60 or more minutes of activity a day should be moderate or vigorous intensity. Moderate intensity is when you’re breathing hard but can still talk easily. Vigorous intensity is when you can only say a few words before you need to take a breath.