



PRETZEL ARMS

CALMING & REFOCUSING STRATEGIES

LESSON PLAN

Purpose

Calming and Refocusing activities help students regain calm after exercise or high energy transitions and bring their attention back to their body by focusing on breathing and slow purposeful movement. The use of these strategies can aid in self-regulation, stress reduction, and attention refocus.

Materials

- Pretzel Arms instructional video: [Elementary](#), [Middle](#), [High](#)

Procedure: *Instruct students to*

- Stretch both hands out in front of them with thumbs facing down
- Cross their arms to make an X
- Clasp their hands together interlocking their fingers
- Bring their clasped hands back towards their body then up towards their chin
- While keeping hands clasped and close to their chest, rest chin on their hands and take 3 deep breaths in and out
- Unfold their arms and release their hands

Modifications: *Students can*

- Sit in a chair, on the floor, or stand
- Stay in position for more than 3 breaths or for a set amount of time
- Simply place hands on opposite shoulders or clasp hands under chin while breathing



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Chief Movement Officer


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CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Recommendations

- Once students are in the pose, ask them to place finger tips at their mouths as a reminder to be quiet.
- This strategy should be practiced multiple times with younger students as they may find it more challenging.
- Using this strategy prior to and/or in the middle of testing can help students refocus and feel revived.
- Consider increasing the challenge by standing on one leg while doing pretzel arms.
- Since the mechanics of getting into this pose require students to focus to complete, this strategy is beneficial even if the students choose not to participate in the breathing and positive affirmations component.
- Modify to include an additional breathing component, inhaling as students make the pretzel, hold for a few seconds, and exhale as they "unpretzel."



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