

My Two Hands

A transition activity that helps children settle down quickly. Great to use after an activity or energizer that may have them revved up.

GRADE LEVEL

K-3

**SKILLS
PRACTICED**

Focusing, listening,
self-control

**MATERIALS
NEEDED**

None

**PREPARING
STUDENTS FOR
SUCCESS**

Practice saying the
words and actions
together.

WORDS

My two hands go clap clap clap

Clap with the words

My two feet go tap tap tap

Look down and point to feet and tap them on the ground

My two hands go thump thump thump

Thump hands on chest

My two feet go jump jump jump

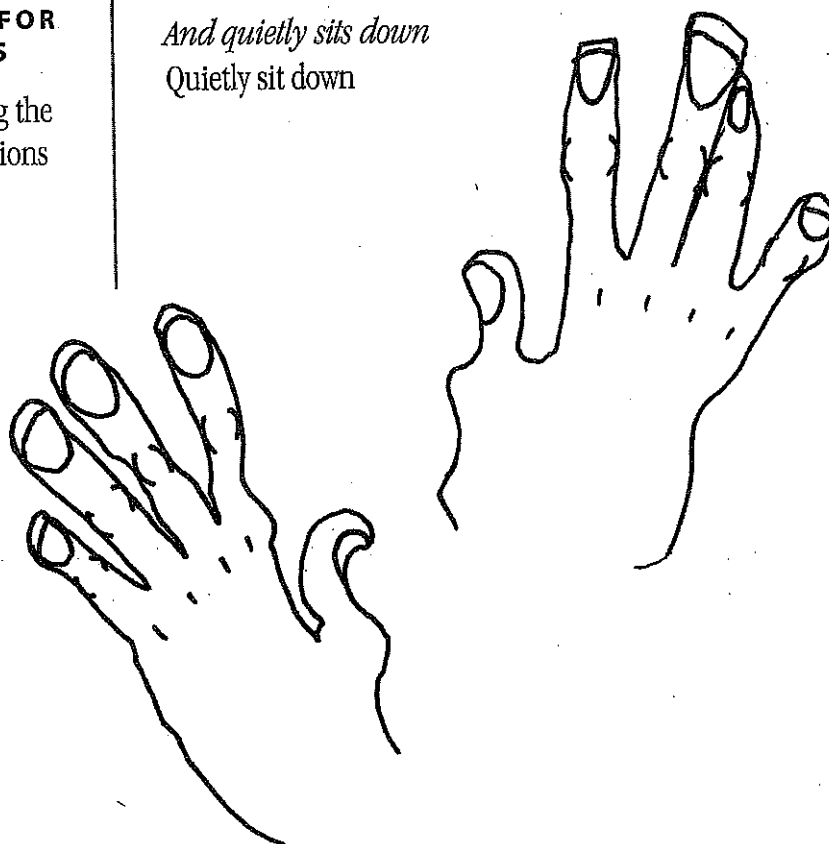
Look down, point to feet, and jump up and down

My one body turns around

Hold one finger up and turn whole body around

And quietly sits down

Quietly sit down



Rainstorm

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It's amazing how much this noise-making activity sounds like the real thing!

GRADE LEVEL

K-6

SKILLS PRACTICED

Focusing, listening,
self-control

MATERIALS NEEDED

None

WORDS AND ACTIONS

Begin by playfully engaging the children: *I am the Storm Master! As I do an action, you will copy me, and before you know it, we will have a rainstorm right here in our classroom!* Then start the actions. As you change each action and the sounds become louder, describe the rainstorm building in strength and then dying down; for example, *First comes the wind, then the soft rain. Next comes the hard rain, and then comes the thunder ...*

As the storm builds:

Rub hands on thighs (light wind)
Rub hands together (stronger wind)
Snap fingers (soft rain)
Clap hands softly (hard rain)
Clap hands loudly (even harder rain—pouring now)
Slap thighs loudly (soft thunder)
Stomp feet (loud thunder)

Reverse sounds as the storm dies down:

Slap thighs loudly
Clap hands loudly
Clap hands softly
Snap fingers
Rub hands together
Rub hands on thighs

VARIATIONS

- Point to a new group for each action—you'll need seven groups. Each group continues its sound as the next group begins theirs.
- Invite a child to be the "Storm Master."



Now I'm Still

This creative movement can be done in a circle or with children spread about the room at desks or tables.

GRADE LEVEL

K-3

SKILLS PRACTICED

Rhythm, self-control, listening, creativity

MATERIALS NEEDED

Drum or other rhythm instrument

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

- Practice saying the words together.
- Practice what it looks like to be "still."
- Model with a small group before having the whole group practice and participate.
- Model and practice actions that will keep students safe from bumping into each other.
- Share ways to maintain self-control while moving about the circle or classroom.

WORDS

Create a steady rhythm with a drum or other rhythm instrument as you chant the words. Students move to the beat slowly and then suddenly freeze in their position when you chant the word *still*. Once the children are reasonably still, continue chanting with another movement word, keeping the steady beat with your drum.

Adapt the beat of the drum to the children's energy level—for example, if they're overexcited, beat a slow, calming rhythm. You might choose to change the speed of the drum beat each time through, challenging the children to be ready to move to the new speed. Have fun with slow motion, too.

Walking, walking
Now I'm walking
Walking, walking
Now I'm still.

Jumping, jumping
Now I'm jumping
Jumping, jumping
Now I'm still.

Continue with more movements!

To end

Slow the beat with each round, ending with several slow, calm beats.

Possible movements

Waving arms, bending forward with hands on hips, tip-toeing, clapping, side stepping, snapping fingers, twirling, jogging, skipping, hopping on one foot and then the other, sitting, blinking, yawning, whispering

VARIATIONS

- This energizer is fun to do outside with a large group. Establish boundaries and practice moving and staying within them. To encourage livelier movements and joyful noise in the fresh-air environment, use an instrument loud enough for the children to hear easily.
- Try it as a waiting-in-line activity.

Go Bananas

A favorite among students and teachers alike. Use to accompany a unit on nutrition, or when you just feel the need to be a little silly.

GRADE LEVEL

K-3

SKILLS PRACTICED

Rhyming,
oral language,
rhythm, self-control,
left and right,
creativity

MATERIALS NEEDED

Optional:
Chart with words

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

- Practice saying the chant together.
- Model and practice actions for each movement; specifically, make sure each child has room to do a standing split at the end.
- Share ways to maintain self-control while staying in one place.

WORDS AND ACTIONS

Bananas

*Bananas... **Unite!***

While standing, extend arms upward, palms together over head

Peel bananas

Peel-peel bananas

Wiggle left arm down along left side of body

Peel bananas

Peel-peel bananas

Wiggle right arm down along right side of body

Peel them to the left

Swing left arm up and behind head

Peel them to the right

Swing right arm up and behind head

Peel them down the middle

Swing both arms down in front and then out to sides

And Unb! Take a bite

Pull both fists down hard at sides while bending knees

And Unb! Take a bite

Pull both fists down hard at sides while bending knees

Go bananas

Point both index fingers up and down above head while slowly twirling in a circle

Go-go bananas

Continue pointing and twirling

Go bananas

Continue pointing and twirling

Go-go bananas

Continue pointing and twirling

Bananas ... Split!

Raise arms straight up and then do a standing split—one arm and leg stretched forward, the other arm and leg stretched backward—FREEZE!

VARIATIONS

Use during transitions, such as from circle to group areas. When you get to *Bananas ... Split!* at the end, replace the word “bananas” with four to five children’s names that will be moving out of the group to their next area. Then repeat the chant with those remaining in the circle until all children have been dismissed.

OTHER VERSIONS

These versions are rhythmically similar to the banana version but omit the movements to the right, left, and middle.

Popcorn

Form the corn

Form-form the corn

Stand up straight, raise arms, and clasp hands above head

Shuck the corn

Shuck-shuck the corn

Wiggle and lower arms slowly down one at a time

Pop the corn

Pop-pop the corn

Jump up and down

Potato

Form the potato

Form-form the potato

Start standing and slowly squat down low, curling into a round potato-like figure

Grate the potato

Grate-grate the potato

Scrape right hand twice against left arm and then left hand twice against right arm

Mash the potato

Mash-mash the potato

Stamp feet while slowly standing and tapping one fist atop the other

Orange

Form the orange

Form-form the orange

While standing, hold arms out in front, rounded as if encircling a giant orange

Peel the orange

Peel-peel the orange

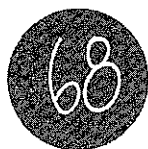
Pull one arm and then the other slowly back

Squeeze the orange

Squeeze-squeeze the orange

orange

Hug yourself



Shake It Down

A great, rhythmic way to loosen up bodies. It also reinforces math concepts!

GRADE LEVEL

3-6

SKILLS PRACTICED

Counting, division,
rhythm, self-control,
balance

MATERIALS NEEDED

None

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Invite students to share ways to maintain balance and self-control while staying in one place.

WORDS AND ACTIONS

Chant and count with vigor!

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ... 16!

Stand and lift your right hand up high and shake it sixteen times

Repeat three times—with left hand, right foot, left foot

Cut!

Slice or cut right hand down on left palm

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8!

Lift your right hand up high and shake it eight times

Repeat three times—with left hand, right foot, left foot

Cut!

Slice or cut right hand down on left palm

1, 2, 3, 4!

Lift your right hand up high and shake it four times

Repeat three times—with left hand, right foot, left foot

Cut!

Slice or cut right hand down on left palm

1, 2!

Lift your right hand up high and shake it twice

Repeat three times—with left hand, right foot, left foot

Start
here or
here

Cut!

Slice or cut right hand down on left palm

1!

Lift your right hand up high and shake it once

Repeat three times—with left hand, right foot, left foot

Cut!

Slice or cut right hand down on left palm

Shake it down!

Shake whole body from top to bottom!



VARIATIONS

- Do in a circle formation, in an activity known as “Lean on Me.” While shaking your right hand, place your left hand on the shoulder of the person to your left. Then switch, shaking your left hand while “leaning” on the person to your right.
- Here’s a challenge: Think of compound words (for example, classroom, doorway, playground) or multisyllabic words (calculator, monopoly) that can be “cut” into smaller words or into syllables. Try chanting just these smaller words or syllables and shaking them down.
- Shake down your spelling words, letter by letter, in the same way. Have fun!

Taken from Energizers! 88 Quick Movement Activities
That Refresh + Refocus K-6 by Susan Lattanzi Roser.
Published by Responsive Classroom 2009.

Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes

An old favorite
with a few new
ingredients.

GRADE LEVEL

K-3

SKILLS PRACTICED

Self-control,
balance,
coordination

MATERIALS NEEDED

None

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Discuss and practice ways to be safe while moving quickly.

WORDS AND ACTIONS

Sing the words while placing hands on each part of the body
as it's named.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes

Knees and toes

Head, shoulders, knees and toes

Knees and toes ... and ...

Eyes and ears and mouth and nose

Head, shoulders, knees and toes

Knees and toes!

Ankles elbows feet and seat

Feet and seat

Ankles elbows feet and seat

Feet and seat ... and ...

Hair and hips and chin and cheeks

Ankles elbows feet and seat

Feet and seat!

VARIATIONS

- Try this muscle verse, posing like a body builder.
Remember to teach the muscle locations first.

—Original by the author

Biceps, triceps, quads and glutes

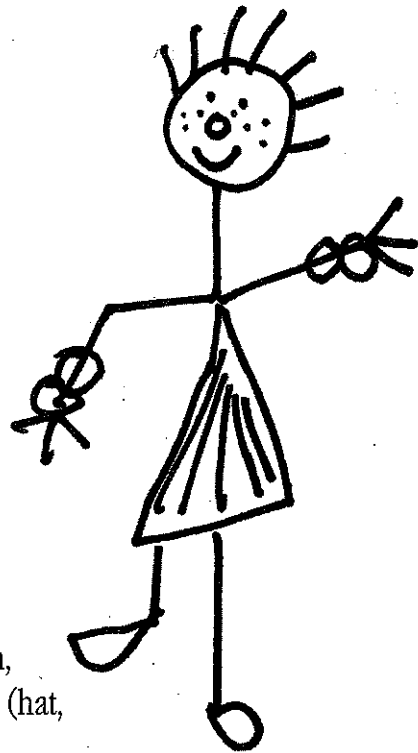
Quads and glutes

Biceps, triceps, quads and glutes

Quads and glutes ... and ...

*Pecs and lats and abs and calves
Biceps, triceps, quads and glutes
Quads and glutes!!!*

Biceps: Top of the upper arm
Triceps: Bottom of the upper arm
Quads: Front of thigh
Glutes: Bottom
Pecs: Chest
Lats: Middle of the back
Abs: Stomach



- Make up new verses for other themes; for example, bones (cranium, sternum, pelvis, and clavicle) or winter clothing (hat, earmuffs, scarf, and gloves).
- When the children become very familiar with a particular verse, try singing it backwards.
- Repeat the chant several times, each time chanting faster.
- Give the children a choice of chanting at a different speed on each repeat: super slow, slow, medium, fast, or super fast.



Dum Dum Dah Dah

A follow-the-leader movement activity. Players chant or sing *Dum Dum Dah Dah* as they make the motions.

GRADE LEVEL

K-6

SKILLS PRACTICED

Rhyming,
oral language,
rhythm, self-control,
creativity

MATERIALS NEEDED

None

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

- If necessary, discuss the meaning of the word "echo."
- Share ways to maintain self-control while staying in one place.

WORDS AND ACTIONS

Children simply repeat your words and actions. Vary your movements by starting off at a low energy level, moving up to medium, and then on to high. Then transition back down through the energy levels in reverse, finally ending with very calm movements. Whispering or even mouthing the words is a great way to end.

Leader

Dum Dum

Clap thighs

Dah Dah

Clap hands

Group

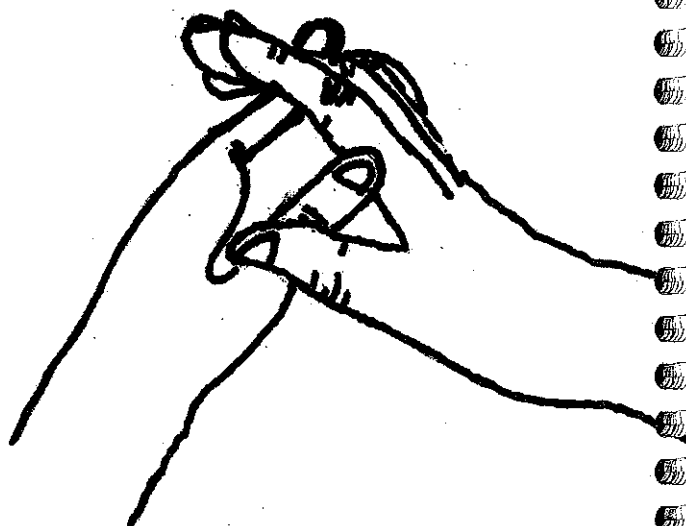
Dum Dum

Clap thighs

Dah Dah

Clap hands

Repeat as many times as you wish.



Possible Movements

Touching toes, reaching far to right and then left, nodding head up and down or side to side, snapping fingers, reaching forwards and then behind back, reaching up high, bending at waist, moving knees up and down as if marching, doing jumping jacks, making large arms circles, jumping high and then touching ground

Ending

Hum instead of saying the words, then whisper the words, and finish with *shh shh shh shh!*

VARIATIONS

- Do slow, fast, loud, soft, whisper.
- Invite students to lead when you feel they're ready.



Do What I Said, Not What I Say

21

This one really
makes you listen!

GRADE LEVEL

3-6

SKILLS PRACTICED

Concentration,
self-control,
listening, memory,
coordination

MATERIALS NEEDED

None

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Practice until all the children understand the concept of doing the previously-mentioned action.

WORDS AND ACTIONS

Stand facing the children and call out a command. Students must follow the previously given command, not the immediate one. For example:

Leader *Stand on one foot!*

Students do nothing.

Leader *Hop on one foot!*

Students stand on one foot.

Leader *Flap your arms!*

Students hop on one foot.

Leader *Pat your head!*

Students flap their arms.

Leader *Sit down!*

Students pat their heads.

Leader *Fold your hands on your desks!*

Students sit down.

Leader *Fold your hands on your desks!*

Students fold their hands on their desks
and are ready for the next lesson or
activity of the day.



VARIATION

To add more challenge, the leader may pantomime the motion as well as say it.

Mirrors

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Creativity and control are keys to success in this calming activity. Younger children may also enjoy it if supported with clear, explicit directions and simple movement examples.

GRADE LEVEL

3–6

SKILLS PRACTICED

Observation,
focusing, creativity,
self-control

MATERIALS NEEDED

A chime or some
other type of gentle
auditory signal

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Brainstorm and practice various movements that can be done slowly and steadily. Remind students to move at a slow pace, and challenge them to synchronize their movements with their partner's. Ask students to share strategies for doing this successfully.

ACTIONS

Students stand and select a nearby partner (or you may assign partners). Partners decide who'll be the leader first, and that student begins making slow and steady movements. The follower mirrors the leader's motions.

At the teacher's signal, the two switch roles.

VARIATIONS

- Choose one student to lead the class. After a few motions, the leader passes the lead to another classmate by pointing to her or him.
- Have two groups of partners join each other. One pair does the mirroring activity while the other watches and works together to guess who the leader is.