



JANUARY 2013

SMALL CHANGES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



Even kids who eat diets rich in “brain foods” struggle with concentration. And it only takes one or two fidgeters to domino into a restless classroom. Luckily, there’s a simple solution that’s good for your students minds AND bodies.

Studies have shown that structured bursts of physical activity throughout the day can help dissipate children’s restless energy and improve their focus. The key phrase is “structured bursts.” These short bouts of activity take minutes to complete. And done properly, they can more than offset the time you’d spend calming and disciplining a restive room.

## Welcome back and **Happy New Year** from **Commit 2B Fit!**

January is a great time to reenergize your students and motivate them for a strong performance in the second half of their academic year. The Commit 2B Fit planner and program can be an integral part of that process. Help your students get the most out of the powerful mind-body connection. **Commit 2B Fit in 2013!**

Kids will quickly learn the routine because they’ll look forward to the distraction. The activities are fun, and you can transition back to a more-ordered classroom by adding 15 seconds of music, turning lights down or having quiet time immediately after the activity. The net result is students who are more alert and better equipped to maximize their academic performance. So when you feel your kids start to buzz, try some of these calming exercises:

### At their desks

- Play a game of Simon Says.
- Sitting in their chairs, have your kids hold their arms out in front of them and wiggle their fingers. Add wiggling hands, then forearms, shoulders, torso and head.
- Perform any number of movements by their desks for 30 or 60 seconds at a time. For ex., jumping jacks, flapping arms like a bird, jumping up and down and/or running in place.
- Do a series of stretches at their desks. A good sequence could include hamstring, quadricep, calves, back, tricep, shoulder and neck stretches.



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- Simulate different types of swim strokes at their desk (front, back, side, breast and butterfly strokes, etc.) Adjust the intensity level based on what else is in the “water” with them—jellyfish, shark, giant wave, calm sea, jello, etc.

**In the classroom**

- Students walk with high knees (up to waist level), either in place or single-file around the classroom.
- Everyone can “bear” or “crab” walk in single file around the classroom.
- Set up a handful of stations around the classroom with a photo/illustration of different activities. Take 60 second breaks to allow preselected groups to run to each station to perform the exercise. Rotate stations throughout the class and day, and swap out the exercises regularly.



**Learning is FUNdamental**

- Students can perform movements that begin with different letters of the alphabet. For ex., F is flap our arms, G is gallop in place, H is for hop up and down, I is for inhale deeply, etc.
- Show flash cards of different farm or zoo animals and have students mimic the animals’ movements and sounds.
- Students can run in place until you yell, “Freeze.” Then ask students to answer a question (word spelling, math sum, synonym or antonym, etc.). Once the correct answer is given, they resume running until you yell “freeze” again. Alternate the duration of the runs to build suspense and interest.
- Prompt different movements from your students based on correct responses to questions. For ex., have them jump up and down when they hear a noun, or do arm circles when they hear a verb.

The goal is to distract your students’ minds and exert them physically in short bursts. It may take some practice to complete in a quick and orderly fashion. But the benefit to your students’ physical and mental development, not to mention your stress levels, is well worth the nominal investment of time.

# Discover a new you by swapping carbs



Today’s grocery stores, and by extension our diets, are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of processed carbs. Look no further than your favorite foods for proof. However, your body does need healthy carbohydrates. The key isn’t to do without, it’s to swap it out. Here are some healthy alternatives to help you curb your carbs:

**Sandwich Bread**

Try healthier dark breads like rye, multi-grain or pumpernickel. For radical carb cutting, try some leaves of fibrous iceberg lettuce as a wrap—you’ll be surprised by the taste and you’ll love that you can add a little extra of the yummy insides.

**Pasta**

Try a low-carb, durum-wheat based pasta and make sure to have only one serving (1 oz. dry pasta). Load your pasta with veggies to make it more filling. For a surprising alternative, pour your favorite marinara over shredded zucchini. You’ll be amazed how much like pasta it tastes.

**Potatoes**

The average potato is filled with nutrients, but it can also deliver a sizeable carbo load, especially if you like to add sour cream, cheese and other toppings. If you like a starchy staple, try roasted root vegetables like sweet potatoes, rutabaga, carrots, beets and yams. Squash and cauliflower with light toppings can also serve as ideal and delicious swaps for potatoes.

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**Flour**

With growing recognition of gluten sensitivities, there are more and more alternatives to flour, especially in baking. One common swap for flour is unflavored oats. You may still need to use some flour for your recipe, but consistently replacing half or more with oats can make a big difference in the long run.

**Pizza Crust**

A healthy diet is about moderation not deprivation, so you don't have to ditch such favorites as pizza. If you're ordering out, go for thin-crust with extra veggies. If you're making your own, load a large portabella mushroom with cheese, sauce and your toppings of choice. Halved red or yellow peppers are another good base for an alternative pizza that's long on taste and low in carbs.

**TRY ADDING  
INSTEAD OF  
SUBTRACTING  
CALORIES FOR  
A HEALTHY  
NEW YEAR**

In our weight-obsessed world, we've come to believe that less is better – less calories, less sugar, less fat. But a calorie is a unit of energy, not a potential fat cell. That's why it's important for you to focus on getting more of the calories you need, rather than eating less calories altogether. Here are some simple steps to help you discover how more can be more.

**Change your mind, and the body will follow.** Try to purge your restrictive attitudes about foods. Eating the right kinds of food, in the right amounts, will help you stay in control. Think of food as fuel that will help you reach—not hold you back—from your goal.

**Raise your calorie ceiling with healthy alternatives so you can lower the total volume of food you eat.** For example, use extra olive oil when cooking meats and vegetables. Try adding about ½ cup of nuts daily to your recipes or snacks. And increase your overall use of other high-calorie superstars like avocados, olives, natural peanut butter (no high fructose syrup), eggs and some cheeses.

**Keep healthy snack options handy in your bag or purse.** An extra 100-calorie snack (an apple) or two can go a long way to keeping you energized and lowering your daily food consumption. Some good options include easy-to-eat fruits (banana, apple, pear), protein bars (check labels



for the lowest carb & sugar levels), homemade trail mix (with nuts, granola and dried fruits), or a bag/Tupperware with carrot or celery sticks and a disposable mini-tub of dressing or hummus.

**If you're stressed by a tight schedule, start drinking... healthy calories that is.** A protein-rich shake can give you all the energy you need to stay on the go and at your best. For a quick and easy shake, buy your favorite frozen fruits, which have locked-in nutrients, and blend with a "clean" powder (low carbs, sugars and fillers – check out Sun Warrior [www.sunwarrior.com/what\\_is\\_protein](http://www.sunwarrior.com/what_is_protein)). You can also experiment with veggie shakes. And for a refreshing liquid snack, try almond-milk lattes with tea, coffee or no-sugar hot chocolate.

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**Don't buy low-fat products.** That many seem counterintuitive, but your body is actually built to metabolize natural fats. These fats are what give foods their flavor. When food manufacturers remove fats, they have to add sugar to put back the flavor. And in a cruel twist, your body is more likely to convert these sugars to fat cells. So enjoy your favorite full-flavored foods in moderation secure in the knowledge that you're getting closer to your goal... and having more fun while doing it.



## Upcoming 2013 health & wellness observances

**January 20-26** is Healthy Weight Week

**February** is American Heart Month

**March** is National Nutrition Month

Visit [www.icommit2bfit.org](http://www.icommit2bfit.org) for additional information and class activity/curriculum tie-ins.



# Incentivize YOUR STUDENTS

**C**ommit 2B Fit can provide you with extra incentives for your students who participate in special fitness events (Jump Rope for Heart, Fun Friday, fun runs, etc.). These incentives are available on a limited, first-come-first-served basis, and include jump ropes, flying discs, pencils, shopping bags, bracelets and extra posters (one per classroom). Order your now while supplies last at [elly@icommit2bfit.org](mailto:elly@icommit2bfit.org).

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THANK YOU!

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