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## Brain Break Ideas for Secular and Jewish Classrooms

**Why do this?** Brain breaks are an integral part of any classroom! Statistically a student's ability to stay focused decreases after 20 minutes, so it's best to incorporate a brain break every 20 minutes for 1-5 minutes each time.

### Physical Activity Brain Breaks to Energize Your Class, Jewishly

- **Just jump:** Get your students off their seats and jumping around. Try bunny hops, star jumps, and more. *Try the song "Ha'shafa Ha'katan"*
- **Do a dance-off:** Students show off their moves in a fun, energetic dance-off. *Israeli music, anyone?*
- **Line up in unique ways:** Alphabetical, by height, birthday month, etc. *Teach kids their Hebrew birthday or Hebrew name*
- **Play Simon Says:** Let students take turns being Simon and leading physical movements. *In this case, "Shimon Omer..."*
- **Do a freeze-dance:** Dance to music and freeze when it stops. *Create a Jewish spotify list for this!*
- **Be a Mime:** Have students act something out and guess what it is. *Do a Jewish holiday or ritual such as building a sukkah, lighting candles, etc.*
- **Have a short workout session:** Use a kids' workout video to re-energize the room. *Some great Jewish songs at [www.bimbom.com](http://www.bimbom.com)*
- **Play balloon volleyball:** Keep the balloon off the ground without using arms or legs.
- **Play movement songs:** Follow-along movement videos or songs. *Jewish/Hebrew movement songs can be found online!*
- **Practice name moves:** Say your name with a silly dance or gesture. *Use kids' Hebrew names!*
- **Go out for a walk or jog:** A quick stroll can refocus everyone.
- **Do an outdoor scavenger hunt:** Search for hidden items as a team. *Use terms for items in Hebrew!*

### Mindfulness Brain Breaks for a Calm Classroom with a Jewish Twist

- **Do Guided Meditation:** *Prayers work perfectly for this!*
- **Take a stretch break:** Relieve restlessness with a quick stretch.
- **Breathe like an animal:** Hiss like a snake, pant like a dog, etc. *Teach Hebrew words for different animals*
- **Focus on sounds:** Sit quietly and name sounds you hear. Who can be silent the longest?

- **Do the ear-nose switcheroo:** Touch nose and ears with alternating hands. *Use body terms in Hebrew rosh, yad, regel, guf, etc.*
- **Do cross-body exercises:** Movement that crosses the midline, like touching opposite toes. *Rosh, C'nafaim, Birkaim, Raglaim -Head Shoulders Knees and Toes.*
- **Rest for two minutes:** Heads down, eyes closed—just breathe. *Play relaxing Jewish music*
- **Do mental check-ins:** Check how you're feeling—happy, sad, tired, etc.
- **Take a yoga break:** Short, gentle yoga session. *Have kids contort their bodies into Hebrew letters for Hebrew Yoga!*
- **Listen to music:** Play calming or energizing tunes. *Bonus if Jewish songs!*
- **Start coloring:** Provide images or blank pages to color. *Some great Jewish holidays or Torah stories are available online!*
- **Enjoy nature:** Watch clouds or observe outside quietly.
- **Have a fun class discussion:** Talk about weekends or favorite things. *Upcoming Jewish holidays or fun family rituals.*
- **Do a mindful listening activity:** Identify sounds in music or video. *There are some great videos on [www.BimBom.com](http://www.BimBom.com)*
- **Test their imagination:** Describe and draw an imagined object or scene. *Do a biblical story!*
- **Play the five senses game:** Name something you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch.

### Creative and Fun Brain Breaks to Spark Jewish Joy and Creativity

- **Give a story starter:** Build a story one sentence at a time. *Use biblical stories!*
- **Play You Complete Me:** Hum and guess songs with a partner. *Holiday songs or prayers!*
- **Clap and repeat back:** Students repeat complex clapping patterns. *There are some great call and repeat prayers!*
- **Play charades:** Act out a word or phrase without speaking. *Use Jewish Themes or Words*
- **Imitate GIFs:** Show a GIF and mimic the action. *There are a bunch of Jewish holiday themed ones!*
- **Create a drawing challenge:** Draw something and vote for the most creative. *Great for biblical stories or holidays!*
- **Play Stop and Go:** Students move and freeze when prompted. *Say it in Hebrew!*
- **Share fun facts:** Surprising trivia to lighten the mood. *Information about Israel or Jewish history!*
- **Play I Spy:** Describe objects based on color or shape. *Teach colors in Hebrew*
- **Have a playdough contest:** Sculpt the most unique figure. *Jewish food or holidays!*
- **Play Pictionary:** Draw and guess Hebrew words or Jewish holidays/ concepts.
- **Do Bubble Wrap counting stomps:** Stomp out energy on bubble wrap. *Count in Hebrew!*

### Resources and Websites:

- [www.Gonoodle.com](http://www.Gonoodle.com) is free but requires sign up. It has many short brain break videos. Though some are quite silly, even middle school children enjoy playing along.

- Great Jewish songs and content: <https://bimbam.com/> direct link to their video sing-alongs  
<https://bimbam.com/sing-alongs/>
- Some Jewish movement songs on Youtube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@morahmusic/playlists>

## Teacher Section: Bringing the Learning Home

1. Write some Brain Breaks from above you would like to try in your class. What are some you use that are not listed?

2. How can you use these brain breaks in your day or incorporate into what you are teaching?

3. Why are brain breaks important? When would be good moments to use brain breaks? What cues might kids give you that they need a break?