

Basic Brain Gym® Concepts

1. **Physical Movement Stimulates Brain Function.** Specific body movements stimulate particular aspects of brain functioning. Brain Gym® movements are designed to activate different cognitive functions, including communication, comprehension, and organization.
2. **Stress Inhibits Learning.** Stress prepares the body for fight/flight (aggression/fear – brain stem) reaction. As a result, activity in the limbic system, where memory occurs, and in the neocortex of the cerebrum, where abstract thinking and reasoning take place, is minimized. Also, the stressed learner can go into a Homolateral learning state, in which the dominant brain hemisphere takes over most mental processes. **Under stress, the non-dominant hemisphere shuts down up to 75 or 80%.** As a result, the learner no longer has full access to the functions of the non-dominant hemisphere. One-sided learning occurs, thus handicapping performance.
3. **Learning Blocks Can Be Released by Brain Gym®.** Learning blocks can be specific or general. We are all “learning-blocked” to some extent, having “switched off” for certain tasks. Brain Gym® movements consciously activate the whole brain/body system, lessening the fight/flight reaction. When learning is easy and stress-free, the learner regains his/her innate interest in learning, and is again motivated to achieve learning goals.
4. **Noticing is a Personal Feedback Mechanism.** All new learning depends on the ability to notice what works and what doesn't work in the mastery of a skill. When the learner becomes aware of various learning blocks (notices), and then can take action through effective tools (i.e., Brain Gym®) that improve performance, self-esteem is heightened. The tools gained through the Brain Gym® processes show the learner how to interact with and control his or her response to the learning environment.

When to Use Brain Gym® for Yourself or a Student

Listed below are several situations that may cause you to feel “switched-off” or stressed. Circle the circumstances that most often create a challenge for you in your life.

Performance anxiety	Lack of communication	Feelings of self doubt
Lack of confidence	skills	Poor athletic performance
Poor memory	Poor balance	Poor coordination
Lack of focus	Giving up	Feelings of intimidation
Lack of energy	Fear of failure	Feelings of pressure:
Feelings of frustration	Critical of others	from others, from home,
Over-analysis	Fear of success	from work
Feelings of anger	Critical of self	Poor comprehension
Bothered by distractions	Lack of concentration	Overly concerned about
Lack of organization skills	Poor physical performance	others

7. “Brain Gym Handbook” by Paul E. Dennison, Ph.D. and Gail E. Dennison

Brain Gym® Readiness Routine—PACE

What are the four states necessary for self-directed, whole-brain learning?

Hook Ups

Part One: While sitting or standing, cross the left ankle over the right. Extend arms, with thumbs down, cross the left wrist over the right, then interlace your fingers and draw them up toward your chest. Hold position and relax for at least a minute, breathing deeply. Part Two: When ready, uncross legs and touch your fingertips of both hands together continuing to breathe deeply for about another minute.

The Cross Crawl

Touch one hand to the opposite knee; alternate moving one arm and opposite leg. Do for 1-2 minutes. Variation—touch opposite knee to elbow.

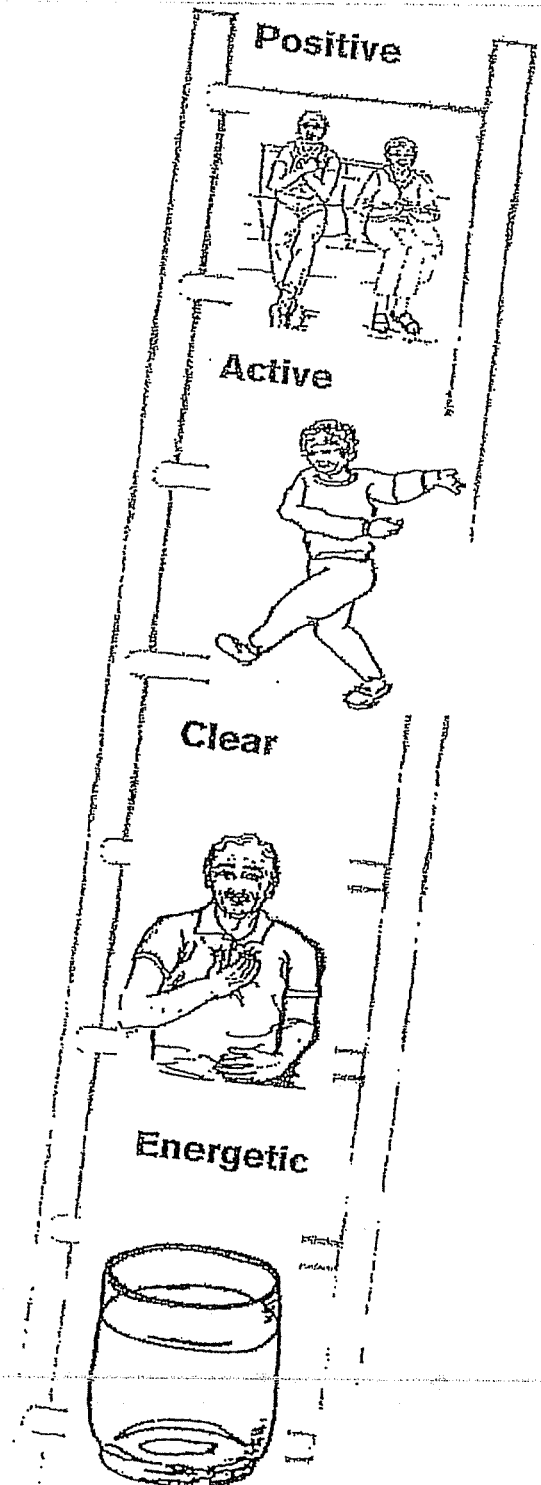
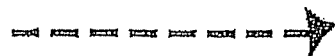
Brain Buttons

While holding the navel area with one hand, rub the hollow area below the collar bone between the first and second rib with the thumb and finger of the other hand. The fingers of the hand rubbing this area should be 1-2 inches apart (chin width). Rub for 20-30 seconds with one hand, then switch.

Water

Drink water regularly all day. Water increases electrical potential across cell membranes, which is essential for nerve net function.

Start with water and work
your way up the ladder



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