BRAIN RESPIRATION
BUILDING A BETTER BRAIN

A Manual for Teachers
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This Manual is provided to help teachers and staff of elementary and secondary schools implement the Brain Respiration: Building a Better Brain Program with ease. Please feel free to share this manual with colleagues and friends.

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With sincere gratitude,
Sarah Hayes, Marianne Lampi & Geoffrey Leigh

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**Brain Respiration:**
**Building a Better Brain**

*What is Brain Respiration?*

Brain Respiration (BR) is a powerful technique to energize the brain. There is no greater way to human understanding than through the brain. BR is based on the knowledge that by transforming the brain, we can direct our physical, emotional, and mental functioning. There are many secret buttons inside our brain that direct the functioning of different systems. The problems arise when these buttons do not function or are out of order. When problems arise, BR is designed to fix them. There are many children who are suffering from all kinds of illness and brain dysfunctions. BR could help with many of these problems.

BR is a special kind of breathing that makes the brain active by using the “Bio-energy” or power of life. Through the use of BR, the blood and the energy circulation is activated. By activating the blood and energy, more blood is brought to the brain, stress is relieved, and a peaceful state of mind can be achieved. BR not only works on the function of the left brain, where most people have greater development, but it restores the whole brain function and thereby helps the child to find his/her whole or true self.

BR has its own origin in Dahn Hak, the Korean traditional discipline for training the body and mind. This tradition began some 10,000 years ago and has just recently been revived and modernized by Dr. Seung Heun Lee. While children are exposed to this approach more often in Korea, there are only a couple of public schools in the United States where this program is being tested. Schools in the Cabrini Green housing project in Chicago are piloting it as part of their curriculum. Noticeable benefits have been observed in the areas of better attendance, more positive attitudes and behavior, more cooperation with others, and more motivation to learn.

*Overview of the Program*

The Brain Respiration (BR) program on brain and body development consists of three areas: Wake-Up Gym, Energy Focusing, and Brain Building. These are different approaches to health and development for children that can be done during three short periods of the school day.

The first area is a stretching program that can wake-up the body and help children prepare for the school day. It is designed to stimulate the body’s meridian system, which is the system that carries energy to all parts of the body, like the veins and arteries carry blood to all of the major organs and systems of the body. Much of the research being funded by the new
A section on Alternative and Complementary Medicine at the National Institute of Health is focused on research and programs related to the meridian system and appropriate interventions. When the meridian system is open and flowing well, each organ and system of the body receives the necessary energy to function well. This type of stretching also can help keep the body limber and stimulate the organs and systems to work properly, as well as help children be alert and feel good in the mornings. The Wake-Up Gym can be done for 5-10 minutes each morning to stimulate the body and the meridian system to function well during the school day.

The second area is Energy Focusing, which is done for about five minutes early in the morning, preferably before starting the school day or for a short break during the morning. Much of children’s work requires a focusing of energy and attention, but they often do not know how to do it well. This practice helps them learn how to get more in touch with the energy of their body, learning to focus it and their attention in fun and interesting ways. This practice begins with learning to focus energy in the hands, then moving the energy to other parts of the body. It also helps with the Brain Respiration that takes place later in the day.

The third area is Brain Building, which is a more direct stimulation of the brain and expanding the use of the brain. This practice uses simple exercises, activities, and energy to stimulate the brain and help brain development in children. These exercises and activities are easy and fun to do with children, with important impacts and implications for the functioning of children in school (see brief literature review). Brain Respiration can be done for about five minutes right after lunch to help invigorate children and prepare them for the afternoon work. It also could be done after the Energy Focusing in the morning, but it may be useful to have one set of activities that are done in the morning and another that are conducted in the early afternoon in order to help them during the challenging time of the day.

Teachers will be trained and provided descriptions of the exercises and activities for all three areas so they are able to lead the children as well as enjoying them and gaining the benefits themselves. We also will check in with the teachers at least once a month to see if they have any questions, concerns, or problems in leading the exercises and activities with the children. At these times, we can help the teachers deal with any difficulties they are experiencing and support them in working with the children.
While cognitive development has been of interest for a long time to those involved in research and educational practices with children, a major focus on brain research expanded dramatically following the landmark work of Gardner (1983), which continues to be expanded (Gardner, 1999). In this work, Gardner outlined the argument and foundation for multiple intelligences and its relationship to brain development in children. Following his summary, increasing interest has occurred on how professionals working with children might facilitate development of different types of intelligences rather than assuming only one type.

In schools, teachers, administrators, and parents became increasingly interested in practices that were related to different types of intelligence development. They began to look for and develop ways to help children with diverse aspects of intelligence, including linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and personal. Even with things like musical intelligence, many changes and developments have taken place in our understanding of what is critical in terms of the relationship between music and brain development (Slade, 2001). In addition, researchers argue convincingly from their work and others that brain and body are closely interconnected, including aspects of memory, which gives us a different view of importance of mind/body connection (Pert, 1997). While many aspects of intelligence were already incorporated in some form within many curricula and could be easily adapted, others, such as spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and personal were more challenging to incorporate into existing programs. In addition, little work has been done to develop increased use of the brain. While we know we use only about 3-10% of the brain’s potential, no program focuses on increasing the potential of the brain itself. Such a program now exists and is being taught in Korea, with a similar approach being adapted and offered within the United States (Lee, 1998, 2000, 2002a,).

Increasingly, programs also are being developed to teach children about the basic parts and functions of the brain (Bleeker, 2001). These programs not only include information and activities, but also fun games to help with the actual development of the brain while also learning about it as an important part of our bodies (Chudler, 2001). Some of these activities also include other aspects of intelligence, such as music, to stimulate multiple parts of the brain through fun activities (Lee, 2002).
The Brain Respiration (BR) approach being proposed here is a system of exercise and energy focusing that combines stretching and exercises with an active focusing of the body’s natural energy to open up the meridian system of the body, increasing health, vitality, and reduce everyday stress in people’s lives. It also makes people more sensitive to the energy of the body and emotions in order to give greater freedom to choose our responses with everyday interactions and events. An additional benefit is that BR also seems to have very positive social and interactional effects on adults and children who participate on a regular basis (Lee, 2002a). This approach continues to expand and develop in order to help students realize the potential and power of their being (Lee, 1999a, 1999b, 2002b) as well as providing them a new way to see themselves and solve personal, interactive, and community problems (Lee, 2000). There are many testimonials about the positive effects of this practice, mostly from adults (Lee, 1997, 1998, 1999b), with some increasing evidence to support the ideas (Lee, 2002a). Yet most of the writings about such effects come from news articles, participant testimonials, or television interviews.

Exceptions to these sources of evidence come from five research articles that have been produced in the past couple of years. The first article was a presentation at a national conference in Korea as the first scientific report on the effects of the Dahn Hak method of BR on children. The research by Yu and Chang (1998) was conducted with 282 students in three elementary schools and one junior high school in Seoul, Korea. The researchers divided the total group into an experimental group (138 students receiving the Brain Respiration or BR method) and a control group (144 students in the same four schools as the experimental group but receiving no intervention). Four assessments were used with both group of students, including an assessment for emotional stability, emotional maturity, short-term memory, and intuition. The BR program was conducted for 5-10 minutes every day for eight weeks with the experimental group. The second group was used to control for maturity effects during that time. Based on an ANOVA test controlling for learning ability, there were differences found in emotional maturity, short-term memory, and intuition, but no differences were found in emotional stability. With only a short intervention on a daily basis for eight weeks, differences were found that were above chance, with important implications regarding children’s learning.

The second study, conducted by Park, Lee, and Lee (2000), was developed to test whether BR training could influence endocrine responses related to stress. In this case, 14 adults participated in the BR method for one to three months prior to the study, usually on a daily basis for about 30
minutes. An additional group of 14 adults, similar in age and gender to the experimental group, also participated in the study. Both groups relaxed with their eyes open for 30 minutes, then the experimental group participants practiced the BR technique for 50 minutes while the adults in the control relaxed for the same period of time. During the post-treatment period, each adult sat with eyes open for 40 minutes. Each participant had an arterial catheter in the brachial artery of the arm, and blood was drawn at regular and consistent intervals during the study. Comparisons were made between groups on epinephrine, norepinephrine, plasma cortisol, and endorphins. Significant differences were found for epinephrine during the treatment phase (with decreasing amounts compared to the control group), increasing again slightly during the third period. Norepinephrine decreased significantly for the experimental group during the treatment and post-treatment periods. The reduction of both chemicals would suggest an effect on the metabolism related to acute stress. In addition, plasma cortisol was significantly lower in the experimental group during the treatment and after treatment periods. This would suggest a possible reduction in a chemical related to chronic stress. Finally, plasma-endorphin levels also dropped significantly in the experimental group toward the end of the treatment session compared to the control group. In this case, BR training seems to influence the regulation of a stress-induced hormone in relation to pituitary hormonal levels.

Two studies focused on the effects of BR training on the brain activity of elementary school (Kim, Kim et al., 2001; Kim, Choi, et al., 2001). Both studies used the same group of children, using a training group of 12 children (6 females, 6 males) and a matched control group of 12 children (7 females, 5 males). The children in the training group were taught brain respiration and practiced the techniques for an hour twice a week for a period ranging from 4 to 14 months. The children were healthy, socially well adjusted, with no indication of abnormality or history of seizures, fainting, brain damage, or recent drug use. Brain activity was measured at 12 different points and all measures were taken at the same time of day. There were significant differences between the two groups, with children trained in BR maintaining a tranquil higher alpha activities (Kim, Kim, et al., 2001). There seems to be some indication that BR training activates the brain function through the changes in the activity of the frontal association area where higher mental integration and creative activities occur. Children training in BR also showed lower theta rhythm, lower beta power, and higher alpha power in the left frontal region compared to the control group of children (Kim, Choi, et al., 2001). Both studies support changes in brain
activity in useful ways, both in terms of mental functioning as well as greater emotional maturation with BR training and practice.

The fifth study was conducted by the Korean Human Body Science Development Research Center with a group of 126 elementary and middle school youth during an eight-day camp (Hong, 1998). This camp was specifically designed as a brain respiration camp to develop the mind with two groups of youth, a beginning group (88 youth) and an intermediate group (38 youth). In this case, the children participated in exercises three times a day, with other aspects of training occurring at other times. These youth became more sensitive, learned about their body and mind, developed greater focus on long term goals, and felt greater confidence and happiness. This study was more of an experimental demonstration with little systematic evaluation, but the qualitative information from the students was very positive and consistent.

From these five studies, it appears that the BR method has positive effects on school performance, changes in development and behavior, brain functioning and stress reduction, as well as stress reduction hormone levels in the body. Besides the effects of doing some exercise, methods such as Brain Respiration seem to have much greater impacts than other approaches on both behavior and individual health. Much more research needs to be done, including a full-scale study, as suggested by Yu and Chang (1998). Yet the initial findings are suggestive of important and pervasive impacts from this method, both for children and adults.

References


Brain Respiration: Building a Better Brain
Helpful Hints

1. Teachers should use a soft, comforting voice when leading students through Energy Focusing and Brain Building Exercises.

2. Quiet music is helpful to relax the students.

3. Dimming the lights is helpful in setting a “quiet” tone for relaxation.

4. It is helpful to begin each session with an exercise to stimulate the body. The teachers should instruct the students to breathe deeply filling their abdomens upon inhaling and then slowly exhaling. Repeat three times. (Breathing deeply allows oxygen and blood flow to the brain, aiding in the relaxation response.

5. Each session should end with three deep breaths. Upon the third breath, exhale between the teeth making a hissing sound while bending forward.
   a. Students should clap their hands together ten to twenty times, hold their breath while rubbing palms together, making them “hot.”
   b. Students should place their hands over their eyes feeling the heat energy. Teachers should tell the students to rotate their eyes in a full circle to the left and to the right. Repeat three times.
   c. Students may clap their hands ten more times, holding their breath while rubbing their palms together. The students will feel their heat energy on their face, washing their complexion. Students can repeat teacher-given affirmations while washing their face. ie. “I love my face”, or “I am so beautiful.”

6. If time permits, a discussion following the exercise is very beneficial.

7. Remember to “SMILE” from your heart.
Chapter 1

WAKE-UP GYM EXERCISES

The following exercises are used in the beginning of any Brain Respiration class to warm up the body, stretch the muscles, loosen the joints, increase flexibility, and most importantly, open the meridian energy channels of the body. These exercises can be used with adults and children, and they are helpful to anyone who uses them regularly.

Caution should be used with people who have problems in any particular part of the body or problems with the heart. The exercises still can be done, but they should be done in moderation and without further injury to the body. Children and adults should only do them as they do not push the body too far and create additional damage to a joint or muscle. The exercises are designed to extend both flexibility and strength, and they should not be done to an extreme. It is good to push a muscle or joint slowly and slightly beyond comfort, but not to the point of extreme pain.

If there is any concern about doing such exercises, a trainer and/or physician should be consulted as the advisability of participation in such a program. Generally, when a child or adult is fairly healthy and is not experiencing a particular problem in the body, these exercises tend to increase health, energy, and vitality. Wisdom always should prevail in applying this or any other exercise program.

These exercises were adapted from the following materials:


The photographs are original and were taken for this manual with the assistance of children involved at the Brain Respiration Summer Camp and at the Las Vegas Dahn Center.
SWEEP AND BOUNCE

With knees bent sweep with hands loosely down sides of body as you bounce rhythmically and gently up and down.

Effect: Relieves the important joints on hips, knees, ankles, shoulders, elbows and wrists. Improves the circulation of the blood and energy activation the function of the internal organs.

Warning: Keep the soles of the feet on the floor, and look far away but concentrate your mind on the soles.

TWISTING ARMS

With arms extended horizontally from the shoulders, twist from the shoulders so that the palms are facing opposite direction up and down. Head follows the palm that is twisted upward.

Effect: Make wrists and shoulders flexible and energetic, and decreases the fat in the muscles in arms.
PALMS EXTENSION OUTWARD

With feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent to create a firm leg stance (and avoid knee problems), clasp hands together in front of body. Breathing in, raise hands up toward face then turn palms away from body with arms extended. Energetically in the position, swing extended arms out to left then to right side turning from the waist. Hold breath and release.

**Effect:** Relieves the shoulder joints and muscles.

**Warning:** Keep the feet flat on the floor.

PALMS EXTENSION UPWARD

With feet shoulder width apart, clasp hands together in front of the body. With hands clasped, breathe in raising arms overhead and palms extended outward toward ceiling. Look at the backs of your hands with head tilted back. Exhale as arms are coming down.

**Effect:** Relieves the shoulder joints and stretches back muscles.
BALANCING THE PLATE

With one foot placed shoulder width in front of the other, with the same hand as the forward foot, balance an imaginary plate on hand. Opposite hand is placed on the hip of the leg that is back. Turn hand inward pointing toward body and make a tight circle and bring it around spiraling perfectly upward so that the spine straightens and hand in use is above head with palm facing upward. Then reverse.

**Effect:** Relieves the joints, improves circulation, and makes the waist flexible. Stimulates autonomic nervous system.

STRENGTHENING NECK

Drop head with chin to chest and lift backward extending chin as head drops back. Turn head from left to right placing chin over shoulder. Try to see shoulder. Drop left ear to touch left shoulder, and then reverse. Rotate head gently dropping chin to chest. Rotate completely to left. Then reverse in complete rotation.

**Effect:** Relieves headache and heat in the head, activates the circulation of blood and energy strengthening the muscles of the neck.
ROTATION OF BENDING KNEES

With legs extended to sides and hands on hip, bend knees slightly and rotate body at knees making a circular motion first left and then right.

**Effect:** Relieves the knees joints making them flexible.
**Warning:** Make sure of rotating body at knees, and breathe naturally looking at the tips of the toes.

SPINE STRETCHING
(Backward Roll)

In squatting position locking arms around knees, roll backward along the spine using the energy to roll forward to the original position. The exercise works on the momentum of the movement.

**Effect:** Makes the entire spinal cord flexible, and activates the inner organs.
HEAD TO KNEE

With feet together and legs straight, breathe in, then release the breath and slowly bring hands down towards ankles as far as possible. Grab the leg or ankle and hold for 3-5 seconds, then release. Repeat the breathing and stretching, trying to grab slightly lower on the leg or ankle. Slowly repeat a third time, grabbing slightly lower than the second time. Each time, try to hold 3-5 seconds before releasing.

**Effect:** Stretches the hamstring and leg muscles, and strengthens them.

HIP ROTATION

With legs open more than shoulder width apart and hands on hips, lift left leg rotate in circular motion from outside of body to inside. Then lift right leg and do the same rotation from outside of body to inside. Switch direction from inside of body to outside. Concentrate your mind on the hip joints.

**Effect:** Increases flexibility in hip joints.

**Warning:** Concentrate in the hip joints while rotating slowly.
CLASPING HANDS BEHIND BACK

With feet more than shoulder width apart, clasp hands behind back breathing in with chin extended. Lean forward from the waist holding breath, and dropping head toward knees. Bounce lightly with arms still raised as high as possible behind back, bounce toward left knee and then right. Bring body to upright position and breathe out shifting arms slightly from side to side behind you and release slowly.

**Effect:** Aligns the lumbar.

BACK STRETCH

Sitting on the floor with legs extended and together, straighten and extend from the back while reaching forward grasping the soles of the feet. Bounce upper body toward legs. Repeat.

**Effect:** Stimulates the kidneys and bladder. Activates the blood circulation in the legs, and relieves the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerve.

**Warning:** Keep the legs extended and together, and bounce upper body slightly, deeper and deeper.
STIMULATING THE SPINAL CORD

Sit on the floor with legs open in wide “V” feet leaning forward. Release breath. Straighten up; twist torso left from spine until right ear touches the floor. Arms are supporting upper body. Reverse.

**Effect:** Makes the waist flexible and aligns it. Relieves the tiredness of legs.

ARM THROW

With legs shoulder width apart, throw the arms to the sides like splashing the water from your fingertips. Repeat the same motion forward, upward, and downward.

**Effect:** Reduces any pain in the neck or shoulders and warms cold fingertips.
HALF KNEE STRETCH

Bend the left knee and turn the right foot to the left at a 45-degree angle. Straighten the right knee with the heel on the floor and toes pointing upward. Put hands on the knees, and bounce gently towards the left knee. Repeat the same movement for the opposite side. This movement provides a good stretch for the hip joints.

FULL KNEE STRETCH

Open legs wide. Bend the right knee and stretch the left leg out straight to the left of the body, with heel on the floor and toes pointing upward. Place the hands on the knees. Gently bounce towards the left knee. Repeat this motion for the opposite leg.

Effect: This movement helps relax the hip joints and tightness in the leg muscles.
THIGH STRETCH

Bend the right knee and stretch the left leg out behind the body. Place the left hand on the floor and right hand on the right knee. Gently bounce to gain flexibility. Repeat this motion with the opposite leg.

**Effect:** This movement will stretch the thighs, reduce tension in the legs and prevent bowing of the legs.

LOWER BACK STRETCH

Stand with legs a little more than shoulder width apart and clasp palms together. Raise the left knee and move to the right while, at the same time, twisting the clasped palms to the left. Repeat this motion in the opposite direction.

**Effect:** Twists and stretches the lumbar vertebrae and tones the waist muscles.

WAIST ROTATION

Standing with legs shoulder width apart, placing both hands on the waist. Rotate the hips to the right. Repeat this motion in the opposite direction.

**Effect:** This movement increases flexibility for the waist muscles and hip joints, assisting the body in keeping balance.
**STIMULATING INTESTINES**

Stand with your feet shoulder distance apart. Bend the knees slightly. Place hands on the abdominal area forming a triangle with the index fingers and the thumbs. Place the thumbs on your navel while resting your hands below. Breathe in through the nose with the tongue on the palate extending the abdomen. Breathe out pulling the abdomen toward the back. To concentrate better, close your eyes or keep them half shut. Do this exercise 100 – 300 times in a rhythmic movement. Begin gently and increase the repitions slowly. This exercise may also be done lying down or sitting. Beginners find it easier to do lying down.

**Effect:** Relieves and activates all inner organs, and prevents chronic constipation.

**TWISTING ARMS**

With both arms extended in front of the body cross wrists and grasp hands. Turn hands over and inward toward the body. Breathe in while extending arms out making a kind of loop. Drop head gently backward. As you are unfolding from this position exhale. Reverse hands and repeat.

**Effect:** Relieves shoulders and every joint in arms. Activates the circulation of energy and blood in the neck.
STRENGTHENING KNEES/LEGS

With feet evenly together and knees tight together, bend forward at the waist with hands on knees with pressure. With back extended at a right angle, bounce gently forward feeling the pull at the back of legs. Following in the same position with hands still on knees, bend knees forward and squat. Next, with feet flat on the floor, knees and hands in the same position, rotate knees in a circle first to left then to right. Next, bending with hands on knees separate knees in a squatting position, rotate knees outward and inward. Reverse motion.

**Effect:** Relieves and strengthens knee joints, preventing disease of the knees.

**Warning:** Look forward in squatting position and look down with the knees straight.

STRETCHING FOR LEGS AND WAIST

With feet together, bend forward with palms on the floor, bounce gently a number of counts, turn first to the left and then to the right placing hands to floor beside feet in each position. All extension is from the waist. The fourth position is with wrists forward and hands extended toward the back. In the fifth position on the inward breath, reach down holding ankles pulling head in toward knees. Release breath straightening up.

**Effect:** Stimulates the kidneys and relieves the tiredness of the thighs and legs.
SIDE STRETCH

Stand with both legs shoulder width apart clasp hands together with the palms facing outward. Raise arms over the head and bend, first to the left as far as possible, and then to the right.

**Effect:** Stretches the sides of the body. Aids in flexibility.
ENERGY FOCUSING
LESSON PLANS
Chapter 2

ENERGY FOCUSING EXERCISES

The following exercises are designed for children and adults to experience the energy contained in the body and increase their sensitivity to the human energy field. More importantly, the exercises help children learn to focus their energy, which can be important for mastering complex physical, emotional, and mental skills.

The exercises are most useful if done every day or at least three times a week. Soft, relaxing background music can help children focus their energy and keep their concentration on the exercise.

These exercises were developed for this program with the assistance of Master Jung Lee or adapted from the following materials:


The photographs are original and taken for this manual with the assistance of children involved at the Brain Respiration Summer Camp and at the Las Vegas Dahn Center.
Finger to Palm Tapping

Concept: To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

Objective: Students will focus energy sensations between the palms of their hands.

Materials Needed: Teacher-guided relaxation techniques. Relaxing music (optional)

Time: 4-6 minutes

Method:
  a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed.
  b. Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths, making a slight hissing noise.
  c. Teacher instructs students to focus on the sensation of their left palms as their pointer finger touches the center of the palm (this is a helpful method to feel energy for beginning sessions).
  d. Teacher instructs students to stop tapping their left palm after one minute.
  e. Teacher instructs the students to feel the energy sensations on their left palm while slowly pulling their pointer finger away from the palm in a circular motion and back again (see photograph).
  f. Teacher should allow students to play with the energy sensations, then switch hands. Repeat c. through e. using right palm and left pointer finger(s).
  g. After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy on the palms, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomen and out their mouths making a hissing noise.

* This is a beginning exercise that allows students to build upon one-finger sensations, to two fingers, three, four and finally all five. With five fingers, the students build up to creating an energy sensation between the palms. *
Fingertip Tapping

Concept: To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

Objective: Students will focus energy sensations felt by tapping fingers together.

Materials Needed: Teacher-guided relaxation techniques. Relaxing music (optional)

Time: 4-6 minutes

Method:
- a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed.
- b. Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths, making a slight hissing noise.
- c. Teacher instructs students to tap fingers together to make warm (this is a helpful method to feel energy for beginning sessions.) Teacher should instruct students to do this for one minute.
- d. Teacher instructs students to stop, pulling their palms slowly apart, still focusing their concentration on feeling the energy sensation between their palms. (Students should keep hands no further apart than where they can feel the energy sensation between their palms). Teacher should instruct the students to concentrate on their fingertips and palms.
- e. Teacher instructs the students to push and pull the energy they feel between their fingertips and palms by moving their hands closer together and further apart.
- f. After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy between the hands, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomen and out their mouths making a hissing noise.
Energy Focusing

Concept: To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

Objective: Students will focus energy (heat) between the palms of their hands.

Materials Needed: Teacher-guided relaxation techniques. Relaxing music (optional)

Time: 4-6 minutes

Method:
   a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed.
   b. Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths, making a slight hissing noise.
   b. Teacher instructs students focus on their palms, rubbing them together to make warm (this is a helpful method to feel energy for beginning sessions).
   c. Teacher instructs students to pull their palms slowly apart, still focusing their concentration on feeling the energy (heat) sensation between their palms. (Students should keep hands no further apart than where they can feel the energy sensation between their palms.) Teacher should instruct the students to concentrate on their palms.
   d. Teacher instructs the students to push and pull the energy they feel between their fingertips and palms by moving their hands closer together and further apart.
   e. After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy (heat) between the hands, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomens and out their mouths making a hissing noise.

* A discussion about the energy sensations felt during this exercise is helpful. Allow the students to discuss the sensations they felt after the exercise. *
Energy Ball

Concept: To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

Objective: Students will focus energy ball between the palms of their hands.

Materials Needed: Teacher-guided relaxation techniques. Relaxing music (optional)

Time: 4-6 minutes

Method:
   a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed.
   b. Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths, making a slight hissing noise.
   c. Teacher instructs students to focus on their palms, feeling the electric sensation and pulse between the palms.
   d. Teacher instructs students to pull their palms slowly apart, still focusing their concentration on feeling the energy (heat) sensation between their palms. (Students should keep hands no further apart than where they can feel the energy sensation between their palms.) Teacher should instruct the students to concentrate on their palms tuning into every bodily sensation.
   e. Teacher instructs the students to cup their hands around the electrical sensation, as if holding a ball. Ask the students to rotate one hand forward and one hand backward. Then reverse the direction of each hand, as if feeling a ball between the palms.
   f. Teacher instructs the students to play with the ball of energy they’ve imagined in front of them. They can make the ball grow larger or smaller depending on the energy sensation of their ball.
   g. After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy ball between the hands, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomens and out their mouths making a hissing noise.
* A discussion about the energy sensations felt during this exercise is helpful. Allow the students to discuss the sensations they felt after the exercise.*
Rolling Energy Ball

**Concept:** To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

**Objective:** Students will focus energy ball (heat) between the palms of their hands.

**Materials Needed:** Teacher-guided relaxation techniques.
Relaxing music (optional)

**Time:** 4-6 minutes

**Method:**
- a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed.
- b. Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths, making a slight hissing noise.
- c. Teacher instructs students to focus on their palms, feeling the electric sensation and pulse between the palms.
- d. Teacher instructs students to pull their palms slowly apart, still focusing their concentration on feeling the energy (heat) sensation between their palms. (Students should keep hands no further apart than where they can feel the energy sensation between their palms.) Teacher should instruct the students to concentrate on their palms tuning into every bodily sensation
- e. Teacher instructs the students to cup their hands around the electrical sensation, as if holding a ball. Ask the students to rotate one hand forward and one hand backward. Then reverse the direction of each hand, as if feeling a ball between the palms.
- f. Teacher instructs the students that once they feel the energy ball, use their right hand holding the ball (hand cupped.) Ask students to roll the energy ball up the backside of their left hand, continuing up the arm to the shoulders. Then roll the energy ball back down the inside of their arm, palm face up.
- g. Teacher should remind the students to stay focused feeling every sensation as they roll their energy ball.
h. After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy ball between the hands, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomens and out their mouths making a hissing noise.

*As students continue to practice energy ball rolling, the teacher can instruct the students to switch hands, rolling the energy ball to both sides of the body. The students may also roll the energy ball across the chest continuing down the opposite side of the body and back up again.*

* A discussion about the energy sensations felt during this exercise is helpful. Allow the students to discuss the sensations they felt after the exercise.*
**Energy Columns**

**Concept:** To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

**Objective:** Students will focus energy columns on the palms of their hands.

**Materials Needed:** Teacher-guided relaxation techniques.
Relaxing music (optional)

**Time:** 4-6 minutes

**Method:**
- a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed.
- b. Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths, making a slight hissing noise.
- c. Teacher instructs students to imagine that they are holding a heavy object in each palm. Teacher asks students to slowly raise one palm and lower the other palm at the same time.
- d. Teacher instructs students to move hand very slowly, focusing their attention on every sensation. The teacher tells the students to imagine the weight in the palm of each hand to be a column reaching the sky. Teacher instructs the students to move the energy columns up and down with the movement of their hands.
- e. After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy column on their palms, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomens and out their mouths making a hissing noise.

* A discussion about the energy sensations felt during this exercise is helpful. Allow the students to discuss the sensations they felt after the exercise.*
Energy Breathing  
(synchronized with breath)

Concept: To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

Objective: Students will focus energy sensation between the palms of their hands synchronizing the movements with breathing.

Materials Needed: Teacher-guided relaxation techniques. Relaxing music (optional)

Time: 4-6 minutes

Method:
- Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed.
- Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths, making a slight hissing noise.
- Teacher instructs students to focus on their palms, feeling their pulse and energy sensations between the palms.
- Teacher instructs students to pull their palms slowly apart, still focusing their concentration on feeling the energy (heat) sensation between their palms. (Students should keep hands no further apart than where they can feel the energy sensation between their palms.) Teacher should instruct the students to concentrate on their palms, tuning into every bodily sensation.
- Teacher instructs the students to slowly inhale through their nose all the way down to the abdomen. While inhaling slowly, students should pull their hands apart. Upon exhaling, students bring their hands closer together, synchronizing their hand movements with their breathing (see illustration.)
- Teacher instructs the students to push and pull the energy they feel between their palms by moving their hands closer together and farther apart synchronized with their breathing.
- After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy between the hands, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times.
Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomens and out their mouths making a hissing noise.

* A discussion about the energy sensations felt during this exercise is helpful. Allow the students to discuss the sensations they felt after the exercise.*
Energy Focusing Illustrations

Figure 1
Finger Palm Tapping

Figure 2
Fingertip Tapping

Figure 3
Energy Focusing

Figure 4
Energy Ball

Figures 5
Rolling Energy Ball
Energy Focusing Illustrations (cont.)

Figure 6
Energy Columns

Figures 7
Synchronized Breathing

* Teachers will want to follow the order of the Energy Focusing Lessons, building toward the more advanced lessons. *
Chapter 3

BRAIN BUILDING EXERCISES

The following exercises are designed for children and adults to stimulate and clean the energy of the brain. These exercises are an important part of a complete Brain Respiration Program and should be included every day or at least three times a week. Prior to doing the Brain Building Exercises, it is most helpful if students participate in at least a short period of the Wake-Up Gym Exercises and have had some experience with the Energy Focusing Exercises. These latter exercises help students get comfortable spending a short period learning how to focus their energy through the focusing of their intention.

Soft, relaxing background music can be a useful part of the exercises, helping children to be comfortable and to maintain their concentration on the exercise. The music should not be too loud, and repetition of music can be helpful so that they focus on the energy rather than the tune or musical sounds.

These exercises were developed for this program with the assistance of Master Jung Lee or adapted from the following materials:


The photographs are original and taken for this manual with the assistance of children involved at the Brain Respiration Summer Camp and at the Las Vegas Dahn Center.

The Brain Circuit diagrams and exercises were developed and reproduced with permission from the Brain Respiration Workbook, (High School/Adult Level C – Phase 3.2-1) a part of the Joyful Brain Respiration Program developed by the Dahn Masters at the Dahn Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.
Brain Stimulation through Energy

**Concept:** To use the natural energy of the body to stimulate the activity of the brain. Aids students in creating connections between the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

**Objective:** Students will focus their energy into their head and brain.

**Materials Needed:** Teacher-guided focusing techniques.  
Experience having felt the energy in their hands  
(recommended)  
Relaxing Music (optional)

**Time:** 3-5 minutes

**Method:**

a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs or floor) with backs straight, away from their chair-back, palms resting on their knees, and eyes closed.

b. Teacher instructs the students to relax their bodies, breathing deeply and slowly.

c. Teacher instructs students to focus on their palms, often repeating the word “palm” for emphasis. Then ask students to raise their palms 4-5” from their knees and turn them so they are facing each other, slightly apart from each other (1-3 inches apart, not touching anywhere). Have them focus on the energy between their palms, feeling any sensations they might have between their hands (heat, tingling, pulling or pushing like a magnet, etc.). Have them continue to focus on their palms.

d. After focusing on their palms and any sensation they feel between their hands, the teacher directs students to bring their hand palms facing on each side of their head, about 1-3 inches away.

e. Teacher asks the students to move their hands away from the head as they breathe in, then bring the palms back closer to the head as they exhale (still without touching the head). Have the students keep moving their hands out slowly with each inhale and back in slowly with each exhale.

f. As the students continue to move their hands slowly outward and back inward, teacher suggests that the students also move their hands
to different parts of the head so they eventually cover all parts of the
side, top, front, and back of the brain.
g. After 2-3 minutes of cleaning, teacher instructs the students to bring
their palms back down to their knees. Ask them to inhale and then
exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all
the way down to their abdomen and out through their mouths making
a “s” or hissing sound with their tongues near the roof of their mouth.
Brain Cleaning through Energy

Concept: To use the natural energy of the body to clean the brain. Aids students in creating connections between the left and right hemispheres of the brain as well as increasing overall energy activity of the brain.

Objective: Students will focus their energy into their head and brain.

Materials Needed: Teacher-guided focusing techniques.
Experience having felt the energy in their hands (recommended)
Relaxing Music (optional)

Time: 3-5 minutes

Method:
- a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs or floor) with backs straight, away from their chair-back, palms resting on their knees, eyes closed.
- b. Instruct students to relax their bodies, breathing deeply and slowly.
- c. Instruct students to focus on their palms, often repeating the word “palm” for emphasis. Then ask students to raise their palms 2-3” from their knees and turn them so they are facing each other, slightly apart from each other (1 inch apart, not touching anywhere). Have them focus on the energy between their palms, feeling any sensations they might have between their hands (heat, tingling, pulling/pushing like a magnet, etc.). Have them continue to focus on their palms.
- d. After focusing on their palms and any sensation they feel between their hands, the teacher directs students to bring their hands up so there are on each side of their head, again about 1-3 inches away.
- e. Teacher asks the students to move energy from the palms through the brain like a stream of water running over the brain. Have the students imagine that the energy is “cleaning” the brain, washing out old, stagnant energy, replacing it with new, fresh energy. Instruct students to keep the energy flow going, washing every part of the brain (each corner, bend, pathway that exists within the brain).
- f. After 2-3 minutes of cleaning, teacher instructs the students to bring their palms back down to their knees. Ask them to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomen and out through their mouths making a “s” or hissing sound with their tongues near the roof of their mouth.
Infinity Sign Tracking (Lazy 8’s)

Concept: To use the infinity sign and the tracking of that sign with the eyes to stimulate connections between the left and right hemisphere of the brain.

Objective: Students will use the eye movements following the infinity sign to increase neural connections between the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

Materials Needed: Paper (letter, legal, or art)
Crayons or colored pencils
Large copy of infinity sign for children to see
Relaxing Music (optional)

Time: 3-5 minutes

Method:
  a. Teacher draws an infinity sign (“lazy eight”) on the board or on a large sheet of paper that is hung so every student is able to see it.
  b. Teacher distributes paper and crayons/pencils to each student.
  c. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs or floor) with backs straight.
  d. Teacher instructs the students to take one crayon/pencil and begin to draw the infinity sign on a sheet of paper. Note: It is important that students make the sign in a constant and continuous manner, keeping their hands moving in a slow, steady pace, continually moving their crayon/pencil around the infinity sign with their eyes continuously tracking the movement. Tell students not to worry about having the repeating sign exact, but rather to focus on a continual infinity sign motion.
  e. If a student is having trouble making the sign or doing it in a continual motion, teachers can take their hands to begin helping them make a constant motion in a free flowing manner.
  f. If student want to change the color of the crayon/pencil, encourage them to do so after retracing the infinity sign several times with the first one. Students can even use more than one color at a time, but it usually is best to start with one crayon/pencil the first few times.
  g. It is useful to have students put their name and date on the paper. This allows teachers to see the changes in their creating the sign easily and in a flowing manner over time.
* Note: Student is visually tracking the Infinity Sign (number eight on it’s side) using his thumb. This is a variation to the drawing method. For best results, have students focus on their thumbnail while making the “infinity sign” motion. Instruct students to only motion the infinity sign as fast as or slow as their eyes can follow. *
Pattern Drawing and Tracking

Concept: To use a variety of patterns and the tracking of those patterns with the eyes to stimulate activity in different parts of the brain. Aids in the formation of connections between the left and right hemisphere of the brain.

Objective: Students will use pattern and eye movements to increase brain activity and neural connections between the left and right brain hemispheres.

Materials Needed: Paper (letter, legal, or art)
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Large copy of patterns for children to see
- Relaxing Music (optional)

Time: 3-5 minutes

Method:
- a. Teacher hangs a copy of the patterns on the board or on a large sheet of paper that is arranged so every student is able to see it. (See attached sheet for the different patterns students should practice).
  
  Note: It is best to choose one or two patterns for the day, showing them on that pattern or patterns teachers want them to draw that day.
- b. Teacher distributes paper and crayons/pencils to each student.
- c. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs or floor) with backs straight.
- d. Teacher instructs the students to take a crayon/pencil and begin to draw the pattern on the paper. Note: It is important that students make the pattern in a constant and continuous manner, keeping their hands moving in a slow, steady pace, moving their crayon/pencil around the pattern with their eyes tracking the movement. A continual motion is more important than an exact pattern.
- e. If a student is having trouble making the pattern or doing it in a continual motion, teachers can take their hands to begin helping them make a constant motion in a free flowing manner.
- f. If student want to change the color of the crayon/pencil, encourage them to do so after retracing the infinity sign several times with the first one. Students can even use more than one color at a time, but it usually is best to start with one crayon/pencil the first few times.
- g. It is useful to have students put their name and date on the paper. This allows teachers to see the changes in their creating the pattern easily and in a flowing manner over time.
Rotating Plates

Have students stand with feet shoulder width apart and knees bent slightly. Have them put their left hand on their waist, holding their right hand in front of them, palm up about the height of their navel. The right elbow should be slightly in front of the body. In a swinging motion, bring the palm towards the navel, keeping the palm up at all times as if holding a plate. Bring the palm through and moving out away from the body after passing the abdomen, forming almost a complete circle. As the palm approaches a complete circle, begin to move the right arm and palm upward towards the left side of the head, sweeping the hand over the head from left to right, then bringing it back downward to the original position. This double circle (first near the navel and a second over the head) forms an eight pattern in the air.

Begin with the right hand and repeat 10 times.
Then do the same pattern with the left hand, moving it in the opposite direction from the right hand. Repeat this 10 times.
Then combine the patterns, using the right and left hand simultaneously. This also should be repeated 10 times.
Partner Energy Mirror

Concept: To experience the energy our brains and bodies use to function with a partner. Aids students in stress reduction, focused attention and increased concentration.

Objective: Students will focus their energy flow with a partner.

Materials Needed: Teacher-guided relaxation techniques.
                      Relaxing music (optional)
                      Paired partners

Time: 6 minutes

Method:
   a. Students sit comfortably (on their chairs, or floor) with backs straight, away from chair-back, palms together, and eyes closed facing a partner with legs crossed and knees touching.
   b. Teacher instructs students to relax their bodies, holding no tension. Teacher instructs the students to breathe in deeply and exhale all of the tension through their mouths.
   c. Teacher instructs students to focus on their palms, feeling the electric sensation and pulse between the palms.
   d. Teacher instructs students to pull their palms slowly apart, still focusing their concentration on feeling the energy (heat) sensation between their palms. (Students should keep hands no further apart than where they can feel the energy sensation between their palms.) Teacher should instruct the students to concentrate on their palms tuning into every bodily sensation.
   f. Teacher instructs the students to put palms together with their partner. Ask the students to gently and slowly push one hand forward and one hand backward. Then reverse the direction of each hand, as if dancing with their partner.
   g. Teacher instructs the students to focus their attention on their partner’s hands mirroring their partner’s movements. The students should focus concentrating on the energy sensation they feel between their palms and their partner’s palms. As the partners move their hands back and forth, the teacher should instruct the students to slightly pull both hands apart so the partner’s hands are no longer touching.
h. Teacher should remind the students to stay focused feeling every sensation as they move with one another’s energy flow.

i. After a few minutes of feeling the sensation of the energy flow between the partners’ hands, ask the students to inhale and then exhale. Repeat 3 times. Instruct students on last breath to inhale all the way down to their abdomens and out their mouths making a hissing noise.

*As students continue to practice energy mirroring, the teacher can instruct the students to begin the energy mirroring exercise without touching palms.

* A discussion about the energy sensations felt during this exercise is helpful. Allow the students to discuss the sensations they felt after the exercise.*
Brain Respiration: Brain Aerobics

The following exercises can be used in the classroom between activities, as part of an exercise program, prior to a test, etc. The essence of Brain Respiration is to move the opposite limbs simultaneously. Moving the right and left arm and/or leg together stimulates the left and right hemispheres of the brain at the same time. This stimulation of both sides of the brain, enables better communication, induces a quicker reasoning and deductive process.

Brain Geometrics
Instruct the students to raise their right arm drawing a circle in the air. Repeat this motion 10 times. Instruct students to point their left foot while drawing a triangle on the ground. Repeat this motion 10 times. Next, instruct the students to draw both the triangle and circle at the same time. After a few rotations, ask the students to switch to the opposite side.

Arm Pattern Clapping
Instruct the students to clap their hands behind their backs one time. Then clap hands in front of their body. Next, behind their backs and then above their heads. Repeat several times increasing speed with each cycle.
**Cross-patterning**
Instruct the students to touch their right elbow to their left knee as they bring their knee up and forward. Repeat on the opposite side, bringing the left elbow to the right knee. Next, instruct the students to touch their right hand to their left foot as they bend it up and behind their back. Repeat on the opposite side, bringing the left hand to the right foot. Teacher variations can be adapted such as: turning in a circle (both directions) as the students continue the cross-patterning motions.

![Cross-patterning examples](image1.png)

**Rotating Arms**
Instruct the students to rotate their right arm forward using the entire arm. Next, have the students rotate their left arm backwards using the same motion. Next, instruct the students to rotate both arms, each arm in the opposite direction of the other. Then, switch the direction of each arm.

![Rotating Arms examples](image2.png)
Additional Brain Building Activities

Adapted from Paul E. Dennison and G. Dennison’s “Edu-K: Brain Gym Activities”, and Carla Hannaford’s, “Smart Moves: Why Learning Is Not All In Your Head.”

Brain Buttons

Place one hand on the navel while the other hand gently rubs the indentations between the first and second ribs directly under the collarbone, to the right of the sternum.

Note: Placing the hand on the abdomen helps to bring attention to the center of the gravity of the body. These muscles contribute to the balance of the body. It alerts the brain that there will be incoming sensory input. The hand rubbing the indentation between the ribs is stimulating the blood flow through the carotid arteries to the brain. This is a good exercise to bring students into focus. It can wake them up and get them ready to learn.

The Energy Yawn

Open the mouth widely like you are yawning. Massage the muscles around the temporal-mandibular joint (TMJ). The TMJ lies right in front of the ear opening and is the joint where the lower jaw meets the upper jaw. The ‘Energy Yawn’ helps relax the facial area so the sensory intake is more efficient. It also helps facilitate verbalization/communication. Often when children are having difficulty with reading it is because their eyes are not working well together. They also might not be hearing their best because of stress. Tension in the TMJ makes it hard for them to verbalize and makes it difficult to process their thoughts. The ‘Energy Yawn’ is said to have remarkable effects on children.
Cross Crawl

Cross lateral walking in place. Touch the right elbow to the left knee and then the left elbow to the right knee. Perform the movements slowly and deliberately.

Note: Cross Crawling is like consciously walking, which helps balance nerve activation across the corpus callosum (bridge between the right and left hemispheres of the brain.) It is good to do for activating full body/mind function. Doing this frequently helps to form more nerve networks and myelin in the corpus callosum, making the communication between the right and left brain hemispheres better.

Hook-ups

Cross one ankle over the other. Stretch arms out in front of you. Place the backs of the hands together with the thumbs pointing down. Now lift one hand over the other, palms facing and interlock the fingers. Bring the locked hands in towards the body and rest them on the chest with the elbows down. While in this position, rest your tongue on the roof of your mouth behind the teeth.

Note: By doing this complex crossover action of the hands, both hemispheres of the brain are activated. This cross-over configuration connects emotions in the limbic system with reason in the frontal lobes. Placing the tongue on the roof of the mouth, brings attention to the mid-brain. This helps to release a tongue thrust caused by postural imbalance.
A good time to use ‘Hook-ups’ would be after a playground disagreement or fight. Ask the children to sit in ‘Hook-ups’ for two minutes before talking about the conflict. During this time attention is consciously brought to the frontal cortex of both hemispheres of the brain and away from the reptilian brain (fight /flight.) The conflict can be handled in a calm and peaceful manner. Hook-ups is useful for helping students to quiet and refocus after lunchtime.

The Thinking Cap

Unroll the outer ears from top to bottom several times.

Note: The Thinking Cap wakes up the whole hearing mechanism and assists memory. It helps one to hear more clearly and to equalize the hearing in both ears. Students have said that if they can’t remember someone’s name or an answer on a test, they perform this exercise and the answer will pop into their mind.
Resources for Teaching about the Brain

Classroom Resources:

1. Life Magazine


   a. Seeing
   b. Hearing
   c. Smelling
   d. Tasting
   e. Touching
   f. Your Senses


Teacher Resources:


