

# Transcript — Brain breaks: The 2-minute reset that brings students back to focus

[\[00:00\] When students check out in class](#)

[\[00:42\] What are brain breaks?](#)

[\[01:10\] Step 1: Plan breaks](#)

[\[02:07\] Step 2: Lead and adapt](#)

[\[02:40\] Step 3: Transition and reflect](#)

[\[02:58\] Why it works \(especially for ADHD students\)](#)

[\[03:36\] Dos and don'ts](#)

[\[04:43\] Recap and next steps](#)

## **[00:00] When students check out in class**

**Stephanie DeLussey:** You're halfway through a lesson when you notice the majority of your students have checked out. Students are fidgeting, whispering, asking to go to the bathroom. They're not being disrespectful; their brains are just done.

**[Description:** A person with long wavy brown hair, wearing a chunky light blue sweater, sits at a wooden desk in a classroom. They speak directly to the camera. Behind them, educational posters are pinned to a wall. A globe and various school supplies sit on the desk in front of them.

Transition to various shots of students. A student in a classroom stares off into space. Two students sitting and whispering to each other. A student raising their hand in the classroom while a teacher stands at a whiteboard

teaches. Then back to the speaker.]

But here's the surprising part: there's a two-minute reset that can bring them all back. Brain breaks.

By the end of this video, you'll learn how to use brain breaks, why they work — especially for students with ADHD and other learning differences — and some do's and don'ts, including the biggest mistakes to avoid.

**[On-screen text and description:** An animated graphic appears listing the three main learning points. A bell chimes each time one of the bullet points appears onscreen.

Today, you'll learn

- How to use brain breaks
- Why they work
- Key watch-outs]

Hi, I'm Stephanie DeLussey. And I'm a dual-certified special education teacher with over 10 years of experience across multiple states and grade levels.

I love brain breaks, and I've used them in my own classroom because they are one of the simplest and most effective positive behavior strategies. So, let's jump into how to use them.

## **[00:42] What are brain breaks?**

**[Description:** A title card appears on a cream background with the text: "What it is — and how to use it." A blue highlight moves over the text as

Stephanie reads the title. Then back to Stephanie speaking directly to the camera.]

Brain breaks are quick, intentional pauses that help students reset their minds and bodies. They range from short movement activities to mindful breathing exercises to simply squeezing a stress ball.

No matter what form they take, brain breaks only use a few minutes of class time, and they help students come back ready to learn. They're an essential positive behavior strategy for your inclusive classroom, from STEM classrooms to kindergartens.

Here's a simple three-step plan for using brain breaks in your classroom.

### **[01:10] Step 1: Plan breaks**

**[Description:** Stephanie holds up one finger. An animated graphic shows the number 1 next to the text "Plan breaks ahead of time."]

Step one, plan the breaks ahead of time. Don't wait until students are totally off task to pull out a brain break. Instead, as you plan your lessons — especially ones with a lot of teacher talk and lecture or complex materials and tasks — build in time for brain breaks.

Plan for a short break in your lesson before fatigue or distraction may set in. Usually about 10 to 25 minutes of focused work. Think of what brain break will work best ahead of time, but be prepared to change it if needed.

For example, if students will be working on complex math problems, try planning an energizing break that gets them up and moving around.

Having a list of go-to brain breaks at your side as you plan can help. The

list should include both energizing and calming breaks.

Energizing breaks are activities like jumping jacks, playing Simon Says, dance breaks, or tiptoe tag.

Calming breaks are activities like gentle stretching, mindfulness exercises, silent ball tosses, or watching a calming video.

And if you want a ready-to-go list of ideas, we've linked our brain breaks guide and a full article with 19 examples down in the description.

### **[02:07] Step 2: Lead and adapt**

**[Description:** Stephanie holds up two fingers. An animated graphic shows the number 2 next to the text "Lead the break and adapt as needed."]

Step two, lead the brain break and adapt as needed. When it's time for a break in the lesson, model the activity so everyone knows what it looks like. Offer accommodations and modifications for students.

For example, students who have motor-skill challenges may not be able to hop on one foot. Instead, have them jump with two feet. Or, you can say, "jump with your legs" or "jump with your arms."

Set a timer for one to five minutes, and use a visual timer so students can see how long they have.

As students begin, move around the room to see what support or adjustments are needed. If a few students are having trouble with the brain break, use a prompt to get them back on track.

### **[02:40] Step 3: Transition and reflect**

**[Description:** Stephanie holds up three fingers. An animated graphic shows the number 3 next to the text "Transition and reflect."]

Step three, transition and reflect. Give students a heads-up when time is almost up. Maybe a two-minute warning and a calm 10-second countdown.

Afterward, take a moment to ask how it felt. Keep the reflection brief so students can use their renewed focus to get back into the lesson.

Over time, students will start to recognize what kind of breaks help them refocus best.

### **[02:58] Why it works (especially for ADHD students)**

**[Description:** A title card appears on a cream background with the text: "Why this strategy works." A blue highlight moves over the text as Stephanie reads the title. Then back to Stephanie speaking directly to the camera.]

So, why do brain breaks work? Students who learn and think differently — especially those who struggle with attention, hyperactivity, or self-regulation — often use a lot of mental energy just staying on task. And they may have a low tolerance for frustration.

Switching up what they're doing for a few minutes can give their brains a chance to reset. Calming breaks can lower stress and anxiety so students can self-regulate and focus.

Movement breaks boost blood flow and oxygen, which sharpens attention.

In fact, one study found students learn vocabulary words 20% faster after

exercising. So, those quick movement breaks aren't a loss of time; they're a boost for learning.

### **[03:36] Dos and don'ts**

**[Description:** A title card appears on a cream background with the text: "What to do — and what to avoid." A blue highlight moves over the text as Stephanie reads the title. Then back to Stephanie speaking directly to the camera.]

Before you get started with brain breaks, here are a few key dos and don'ts.

**[Description:** As Stephanie speaks, each "do" point appears onscreen with a green checkmark.]

Do include brain breaks during lessons and as a regular part of your classroom routine.

Do match the type of break to your students' needs. For example, if you planned for a calming break but students look like they could really use some movement, switch up your plan. Be flexible.

Do keep the breaks short. Five minutes or less is plenty of time.

Do give all students access to the break. Breaks are for everyone who wants them.

And do use brain breaks for individual students, too. They can be great accommodations for students who need frequent breaks, like kids with ADHD.

[**Description:** As Stephanie speaks, each "don't" point appears onscreen with a red X.]

Don't force kids to participate in brain breaks. Some students might feel uncomfortable about group breaks. Or, certain breaks might not work for other students. Decide on a nonverbal signal that students can use to let you know they're opting out.

Don't skip breaks when time is tight. Even a one-minute break can help students reset their brains.

Don't use breaks as rewards, or take them away as consequences. Brain breaks are a healthy part of your lesson plans and classroom routine.

And don't forget to gather student input. Ask them for brain-break ideas. Find out their favorites. And let them choose the break when appropriate. It's fun to get students involved.

### **[04:43] Recap and next steps**

So, remember, brain breaks are just small moments, but they make a big difference in helping students regulate, refocus, and feel ready to learn again.

Try adding one to your next lesson, or to your classroom routine, and see how your class energy changes.

If you want to learn how to stop disruptions without embarrassing kids, check out our respectful redirection video. Or, you can watch the whole positive behavior strategies playlist.

And make sure to hit subscribe for more resources like these.

[**On-screen text:** As Stephanie speaks, links appear onscreen for "More videos:" [How to redirect students without embarrassing them](#), and the ["Subscribe" button with the Understood logo](#).

Transition to the [Understood](#) logo and the [3M](#) logo side-by-side.]