

# Physical Activity in **SMALL SPACES**

Limited space is often a barrier to giving kids opportunities for physical activity.

Many out-of-school programs lack consistent access to outdoor areas or gym space where kids can run around and be active. But even when space is limited, you can lead kids through an exercise routine. Use this handout to create your own!

**A complete exercise routine should include the following:**

- 4 heart pumping exercises
- 1-2 balancing exercises
- 1-2 mobility exercises
- 2-3 strengthening exercises
- 3 ground exercises
- 3 flexibility exercises
- End with 1 breathing exercise

See examples of each exercise group on the next page.

**Aim for 10-15 minutes of movement per routine.**

**Consider creating a routine from just 3 or 4 exercises that are repeated** (e.g. “We’re going to do 10 jumping jacks, 10 hops, and run in place for 1 minute. Then we’ll repeat it two more times!”).

**Mix it up!** Change the order of exercises and vary the combinations. Go down to the ground first, and then go back to standing. Play music. Sing and do the dance for songs like the “Hokey Pokey.” Be creative and keep it fresh.

Content adapted from Outer-Islands Teaching and Learning Collaborative Morning Exercise Template by Lauren Jacobs, Maine Winter Sports Center: [www.mainewsc.org](http://www.mainewsc.org)

continued



try the  
**small space  
exercises**

on the other  
side of this page

### **Heart Pumping Exercises:**

- Jumping Jacks
- Pretend Jump Rope
- Side-to-Side Hops Feet Together
- Front-to-Back Hops Feet Together
- Hopping on One Foot (in a circle, both directions)
- Running in Place
- Marching in Place
- Star Jumps
- Jumping 180° (jump and land facing the opposite direction)
- Jumping 360° (jump and do a full rotation, landing in the same position)

### **Balancing Exercises:**

- One-Foot Airplane Position Hold (arms by side or out as “wings”)
- Tree Pose (standing on one leg, other leg bent with foot on calf or thigh)
- Eagle Pose (legs crossed, standing on one leg)
- Standing Snow Angels (make snow angel shape while balancing on one foot)
- Single Leg Swings Front-to-Back

### **Mobility Exercises:**

- Star Toe Touches (legs apart and straight, arms out, bend down and touch hand to opposite foot)
- Full Body Circles (legs apart, arms out, bend down sideways to make giant circle with upper body down to each leg and back overhead down to the other side)
- Frankenstein Kicks (kick straight leg forward, touch foot with opposite hand)
- Front-to-Back Arm Swings (swing arms like cross-country skiing)
- Knee Hugs (stretch up tall to sky, squat down, and hug knees)

### **Standing Strengthening Exercises:**

- Squats (keep arms overhead)
- Arm Presses (pretend to “lift a bar” overhead from shoulders)
- Snowball Squats (legs wide, squat down and grab “snow” to make snowball, stand tall, step and “throw it”)
- Arm Circles Forward and Backward (hold arms out straight)

- Hold a Skier Tuck (tuck down, bending at the knees, elbows in front of knees)
- Front Lunges (knee over, but not passing the ankle)
- Side Lunges (both sides)

### **On Ground Strengthening Exercises:**

- Crab Position (hold and lift one arm and opposite leg, alternating sides)
- Plank Position (hold push-up position)
- Push-ups (knees down if needed)
- Supermans (lie face down, lift arms and legs simultaneously, hold)
- Swimmies (pretend to swim on belly or on back)
- Bicycle Legs (on back)

### **Flexibility Exercises:**

- Flamingo Stretch (quad stretch, pulling up foot with opposite hand)
- Arm Across Chest Stretch (one arm across the front of body, grasp elbow with opposite hand, pull arm across body without twisting torso)
- Standing Forward Bend (toe touch, legs straight and together)
- Sitting Forward Bend (toe touch, legs straight and together)
- Butterfly Stretch (sitting, bottoms of feet together, flap “wings”)
- Seal Stretch (“cobra” or “upward dog” in yoga)
- Neck Stretches (slowly roll head forward from one shoulder, to chest, to other shoulder and back)
- Core Stretches: Cats (kneeling, round back up, pulling up belly) and Cows (arch back and let belly drop)

### **Breathing Exercises:**

- Arm Sweeps (inhale while bringing arms up overhead, exhale while dropping arms down to side)
- Breaths of Joy (inhale while bringing arms up, exhale while dropping arms to side, inhale while bringing arms up, exhale while dropping arms down and bending forward to toes)
- Oval Breaths (inhale while bringing arms up overhead, pause and hold. Exhale while dropping arms down to side, pause and hold.)

**small spaces  
big benefits**