

Active Classrooms

A practical guide to using Active Blasts to support your learning



Chapter 1 - Classroom set up and expectations

Building an active learning environment

As a team, we are extremely proud to have collectively worked within the education sector for over 10 years and to have partnered with over 600 schools supporting amazing and inspirational teachers just like you.

Over those years, we have seen many changes within the classroom environment.

A big change has been a shift towards more physical activity and active learning. And it's not surprising when you consider the significant benefits that increased movement can have, not just on your pupil's physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, but their academic performance too.

Did you know that just 30 minutes of activity every day can have a major impact on a child's life and whole school improvement?

Yes, evidence shows that regular daily activity can have a positive impact on children's learning and academic achievement, as well as on their social and emotional wellness, in addition to all the physical health benefits too!

Many teachers we've worked with feel that they lack the skills, the confidence and above all, the time, to figure out how to get their pupils more active throughout the day without losing valuable learning time.

Which is why we've created this dedicated resource just for you.

We've broken it down into 2 bite size chunks, and have included a few simple tools and takeaways for you to implement within your classroom to support your children's learning:

- **Part 1 - Classroom set up and expectations**
- Part 2 - Practical activities for your classroom

This handy guide can be accessed anytime, anywhere, by you and your colleagues. Just a little something to give you the extra support you may need during this academic year.

Imogen Buxton-Pickles | Founder and Director of imoves



What are the benefits of getting children more active?

It's really important for children to be active every day. Not only will it improve their physical strength, it will also make them feel happier and become more emotionally resilient too.

It will have a positive impact on their brain power and improve their focus and memory making it so much easier to learn and retain new information.

But how active should they be?

It's important to understand how effort levels affect the brain and body.



Imagine a scale of 1 – 10 illustrating light to vigorous activity and effort level.



Effort level 1 – 3

Improves focus, attention and mood as well as increasing blood flow to the brain which will reduce brain fog and improve concentration.

Effort level 4 plus

- ✓ Improves focus, attention, mood and brain fog
- ✓ Stimulates Brain Derived Neurotropic Factor (BDNF)
- ✓ Burns more calories from fat
- ✓ Improves cardio fitness
- ✓ Improves strength and muscular endurance

If you're wondering what BDNF (Brain Derived Neurotropic Factor) is, it's a protein released into the brain during exercise that causes brain cells to sprout the structural branches required for learning. BDNF has been likened to fertiliser for the brain.



Every session doesn't need to be all out sweaty! - In fact, there are numerous benefits to all levels of activity.

Two lighter types of activities include Pilates and Yoga, which offer a wide range of benefits, as well as requiring a more focused, relaxed, and thoughtful mindset.

Anything that gets children away from sitting for long periods is a good thing, and below we've detailed even more ideas to help show what's possible in your own classroom.

Light activity ideas

- Slow movement around the room (such as walking)
- Standing when problem solving
- Stretching, bending, and twisting



Moderate activity ideas

- Brisk movements around the room with intermittent bending and stretching
- Repeated bending and stretching, like standing up and sitting down
- Classroom dance or fitness activities behind their chairs



Vigorous activity ideas

- High impact, on-the-spot activities like jumping, high knee switches and star jumps
- Circuit training
- Total body blast using the chair and space around the chairs

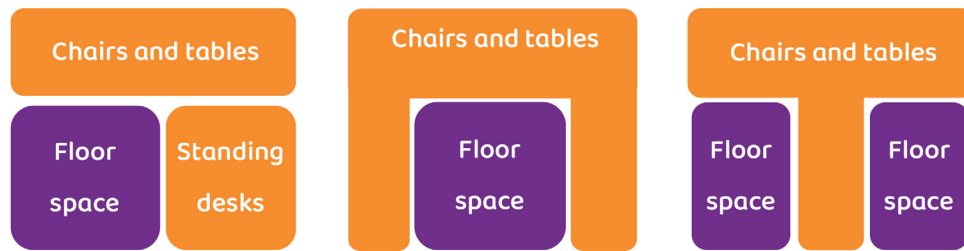


Children love learning actively as it's fun, it helps their brains to absorb more information, AND it improves mood, focus and behaviour. Get them moving as regular as possible and normalise activity in the classroom in just two weeks!

Now let's take a look at how to get your classroom and your children ready for using active blasts.

Declutter your classroom

Start by decluttering your classroom and creating space for children to move around and be more active. Below are three examples of classroom layouts that we find are most effective:



And don't forget about your outdoor space too!

A great way to get children more active is by doing a 15-minute run, jog or walk around the school grounds!

It really doesn't matter how quickly the children complete the activity, and it's not about competition either - it's about getting them up and moving, and enjoying it!

So try to avoid introducing a competition element this activity - it may put some kids off and we want to engage ALL children, irrespective of ability.



Setting expectations

When anything new is introduced, there is always the potential for children to become over-excited and hyperactive. But don't panic - we can help you overcome what we call the **"bad behaviour hump"**

Firstly - lay out some ground rules. Explain that they are going to be more active during the school day, and when & where it's going to happen. Explain how they might feel - a bit warm, slightly sweaty, and more energised.

Secondly - set your expectations around how you would like them to behave during and after the activity.

For example, they should be mindful of tables, chairs and other children. After the activity, should they quickly grab a drink and sit down ready for the next stage of learning.

Remind them that if this doesn't happen they will not be able to participate in all the fun activities you have planned for them!



A final thought from Imogen

After reading this report, I hope you are thinking "I can do this!"

Please take inspiration from this and get your children moving as much as possible every day. Once you are up and running, and more confident using active blasts, you may want to try a spot of active learning.

We're passionate about making teachers' lives easier, helping them to nurture and encourage brighter, healthier, and happier children, and providing expert support and guidance along the way to ensure movement becomes a long-term, results-driven part of your class or school.

This document is just one part which covers classroom set up and expectations - there's also part 2 which includes practical ideas for your classroom.

Drop me an email if you'd like this sent over.

Let me know if this report was useful, or if there are any other activities of your own that you would like me to share with my network of like-minded teachers – it's always great to inspire each other!

You can find me at imogen@imoves.com

Best wishes,

Imogen

PS. Don't forget to set up your free imoves account for tonnes of free resources to support you and your children. Go to imoves.com

PPS. You'll also find a useful webinar to accompany this guide over on our YouTube channel - head over to YouTube and subscribe to **imoves**