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Introduction

The Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids series was created to provide educators and parents with simple activities that help students learn to make healthy food choices, appreciate the importance of daily exercise and develop healthy habits they will maintain throughout their lifetimes. Students who are healthy are better able to learn and be successful.

The activities in this book help students understand where the foods they eat come from and why nutritious food choices are beneficial to them. The objectives outlined by the USDA Food Guidance System formed the foundation upon which the activities in this book are based. The book has been adapted to more closely correlate to the Australian Dietary Guidelines and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. Each of the five food groups is explored in depth. The goal is to build an understanding of the need to incorporate fruits, vegetables, whole grains and cereals, protein (lean meats, poultry, eggs, nuts etc.) and dairy into our daily diet. Students will also explore “sometimes” foods, or treats, and develop a greater understanding of why enjoying those foods in moderation is important to their health.

Physical fitness is also of the utmost importance for growing children, and it is suggested that they get at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity. At school and at home this can be difficult, because there is always so much to do. Still, knowing how important physical fitness is, we have to try! We have provided a variety of effective suggestions for exercises that can be done in the classroom. They can be completed in short increments on a daily basis. In addition to the obvious benefits of physical activity, the inclusion of purposeful physical activity at strategic times of the day can release tension and energise both students and teacher.

In recent years, the Australian Curriculum: English has been developed and is being implemented in many schools nationwide. These essential concepts aim to prepare students for university and careers, with an emphasis on real-life applications. Coupled with the Health and Physical Education concepts, they support a whole-child approach to education – one that ensures that each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged in their learning. The Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids series was also developed to support a whole-child approach to education and can be used to support such health and nutrition policies as the NSW Department of Education Nutrition in Schools Policy (<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/nutrition-in-schools-policy>).

How to Use This Book

Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids, Years 4–5 was developed to provide busy teachers and students with an easy-to-use curriculum to learn more about personal nutrition, health and fitness. We want students to embrace making healthy food choices and getting exercise every day, knowing that healthier students make better learners.

Getting Started

- Share the Healthy Habits pledge (page 6) with students and discuss each line. Challenge students to learn the pledge and share it with family members. The goal here is to inspire the whole family to focus on good nutrition and support healthy habits.
- Post the pledge in the classroom and review it from time to time as students gain more insights into their personal health.
- Introduce daily exercise and breathing activities in class. On pages 9–10 you will find a list of simple movements and breathing exercises that students can do for a minute or two during the day. Display a clock with a second hand or keep a timer handy for these sessions. Use the physical activities to start the day and/or to transition from one activity to another. Throw in an extra one on tough days, or use more than one when weather conditions inhibit outdoor activity. These short, physical exercise breaks are a positive way to settle students for the day’s work. And don’t forget those breathing exercises! They can be done at any time of day and can help refocus or calm students as needed.

Introduction *(cont.)*

How to Use This Book *(cont.)*

Getting Started *(cont.)*

- Gather and display reference materials for the classroom on topics of nutrition, fitness and overall health. Resources might include library or trade books, magazines, posters and kid-friendly materials printed from government websites (see page 3). If appropriate, save links to relevant websites in a dedicated folder on classroom computers.
- Encourage students to start collecting packaging and nutritional labels from food products. Explain that they will be learning to read them and using them for comparisons. Establish an area in the classroom where these can be stored or displayed.

The Student Pages

Student pages present health-related information and activities. Discuss the information together as a class. Share information. Most activities require no more than writing implements and classroom research materials. Devote a certain amount of time each day or week to these activities. The more regular they are, the more important they will be for students.

You might consider interspersing the Healthy Foods activities with Healthy Habits activities to give students a balanced approach. As the teacher, you know how much information your students can absorb at a time. It is also important to be sensitive to the dietary needs and family eating habits of your students.

There are several components to this book. The first section, Healthy Foods, focuses on the five food groups as described in government materials such as *eatforhealth.gov.au*. The goal here is to educate students about healthy foods – what they look like, where they come from, what nutrients they provide and how they can be incorporated into one’s diet. A list of the foods in the food group is found at the beginning of each section. Have students think about the foods they eat regularly, the foods they have not heard of before and healthy foods they would like to try. Provide resource materials for students to learn about foods that are new to them. Encourage students to think about ways they can make healthy food choices each day. Students will also learn about nutrition, including kilojoules, carbohydrates, protein, vitamins and minerals, and the roles these nutrients play in overall health.

In the Healthy Habits section, students are introduced to concepts such as food safety, germ prevention, dental care, physical fitness and other ways to stay safe and healthy.

Suggestions on pages 82–83 are for outdoor and gross motor skills activities. These activities will allow students to explore a full range of motion: hopping, skipping, running, leaping, jumping, etc.

Teachers are encouraged to devote a certain amount of time to journalling. The student journal (accessed at go.hbe.com.au; to find the journal please follow the instructions found on the first left-hand page of this book) gives students the opportunity to express their thoughts about the information presented in the activities and class discussions. It can be used for reflective writing, sorting or summarising information, or to check for understanding.

Reproduce copies of the journal pages (go.hbe.com.au) for each student. You may wish to have students add pages to the journal throughout the year as new food and fitness topics arise. Students can add notebook paper to the journal, or you can reproduce extra copies of the blank journal page that is also provided at go.hbe.com.au. Additional activities are also available to download. A classroom poster is available to purchase at www.hbe.com.au.

Internet Resources

These sites provide useful, age-appropriate information to aid you in embarking on a year filled with active, healthy students. Let's move!

Australian Government Department of Health: Girls Make Your Move

This campaign from the Australian Government's Department of Health encourages young girls to be active, healthy members of their community by connecting them to local and interstate sports-based programs.

<https://campaigns.health.gov.au/girlsmove>

eatforhealth.gov.au: The Australian Dietary Guidelines

This Department of Health site offers resources and information about the five food groups and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

Fresh for Kids

This site offers resources for kids and teachers, including informative pages on specific fruits and vegetables.

<http://www.freshforkids.com.au>

Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council

This site includes research, information and nutrition advice related to cereal grains.

<https://www.glnc.org.au/>

Healthy Kids

This site provides information for schools, students and parents, as well as programs to promote active, healthy lifestyles for kids.

<http://healthy-kids.com.au/>

Nestlé Healthy Active Kids

This site provides tonnes of information and resources for both educators and children. The site also includes helpful lesson plans and tips on building lessons around your state's curriculum.

<https://www.healthyactivekids.com.au/>

Nourish Interactive

This site offers free printable activities based on the five food groups.

<http://www.nourishinteractive.com/nutrition-education>

Nutrition Australia: Healthy Eating Pyramid

This subsection of Nutrition Australia explores and explains the food groups and how Australians can build a healthy diet in their day-to-day lives.

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/healthy-eating-pyramid>

Nutrition Australia: Home

This site offers resources and information about physical activity, healthy eating and the Healthy Eating Pyramid.

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/>

Stephanie Alexander

Chef and author Stephanie Alexander is passionate about raising children and young adults with an appreciation for and understanding of fresh food. This led her to establish the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation

(<https://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/>), which leads schools around Australia in pleasurable food education.

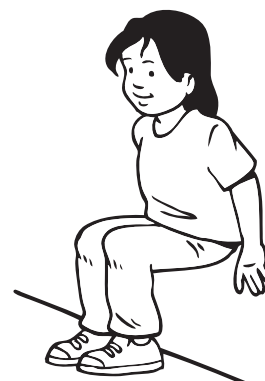
<http://www.stephaniealexander.com.au>



Exercise of the Day

Here are some exercises you can do with students to start the day or during a “movement break” in the classroom. Challenge students to do a few more repetitions each time they do the exercise. Remember though, it is more important to do them correctly to protect your muscles and joints than it is to do them fast!

- Pretend to hula-hoop for 30 seconds. Move your hips!
- Hop on one foot 10 times then on the other foot 10 times.
- Run in place for 1 minute.
- Do 30 star jumps.
- Hold your arms out shoulder height. Make 10 small circles with your arms. Reverse directions and do 10 more. Then make 10 large circles with your arms. Reverse directions and do 10 more.
- Do windmills. Bend at the waist and touch your left hand to your right foot and then swap sides. How many windmills (one left, one right) can you do in 1 minute?
- March in place for 1 minute. Swing your arms forwards and back and lift your knees waist high (if you can).
- Pretend to climb stairs for 1 minute.
- Stand with your feet about 15 centimetres apart. “Sit back” and do 15 squats. Try not to have your knees go past your toes.
- Do 10 lunges on each leg. Your knee should be above your ankle, and not any further.
- Do as many push-ups with your hands on your desk as you can. The next time, try to improve your score.
- How many sit-ups can you do in 30 seconds? Remember, you have to have your elbows touch your knees each time.
- Do chair squats. Stand up just before you sit in your chair.
- Sit on your chair and move your legs as if you are riding a bicycle.
- Do calf raises. Stand on your tiptoes and reach your hands straight out or straight up.
- Do standing leg raises. Place your hands on the back of a chair, bend your knee and raise your leg perpendicular to floor.
- Do wall push-ups for 30 seconds.
- Do 10 wall squats, with your back flat against the wall.
- Do 10 leg raises for each leg. Sit on your chair, raise one leg, then straighten it and then put it back down.
- Raise both legs at the same time while seated. How many times can you do this in one minute?



Exercise of the Day *(cont.)*

Explain to students that deep breathing, bending, stretching and balance exercises help us to relax and to focus. Relaxing helps take away stress. When we return to our schoolwork after a bit of physical activity or a deep breathing exercise we can think more clearly.

As a group, agree that each person will focus on their own movements. No-one will tease or bother anyone else.

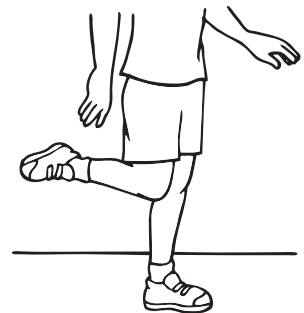
Breathing Activities

Steady breathing can help you calm down and relax. See which of these techniques works best for you.

- Close your eyes and pull air as deep into your lungs as you can. Feel them expand. Breathe out as much air as you can. Keep each breath steady.
- Breathe in for the count of four. Hold the breath for the count of four. Breathe out for the count of four. Try not to take another breath for the count of four. Then try breathing in and out for five, then six, etc.
- Breathe in through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth, quietly saying “haaa.” Focus on the breathing “out”. Your body will do the breathing “in” for you.

Balancing Exercises

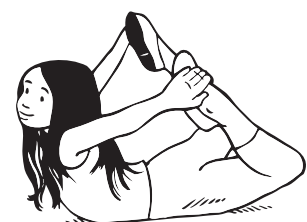
- Balance on one foot for 30 seconds. Hold the other leg up with a bent knee. Then balance on the other foot. Try this exercise with your eyes closed.
- Walk on a straight line (tape or a line on the floor) for 20 paces. Try it with your hands stretched out from your sides, then try it with your hands straight down next to your sides. Which is easier?



Stretching Exercises

We are not all flexible in the same way. Treat your body with respect and don't try to do what your neighbour is doing. Do a stretch that feels good for your own body. With practice, you may stretch further, but you may not. It depends on how flexible your body can be. That is why it is important to respect your own body and not be competitive. The goal of these exercises is to help you relax and be able to focus on your work.

- Sit and bend from your waist to the right, then to the left. Do this 15 times on each side.
- Stand with your legs apart. Bend over from your waist, bending your knees a little. Let your arms hang down. Sway gently side-to-side.
- Sit on the floor and put the soles of your feet together. Sit up straight as tall as you can. Imagine there is a string attached to your head (like a puppet) gently pulling you up.
- Lie on your belly. Breathe in. Relax as you breathe out. Bend your knees and hold your ankles behind you. Breathe in and gently lift your head, chest and legs off the floor. Lift your head and feet towards the ceiling to stretch. Breathe out as you come back down to the floor. Some people will be able to stretch up a lot and others not as far.

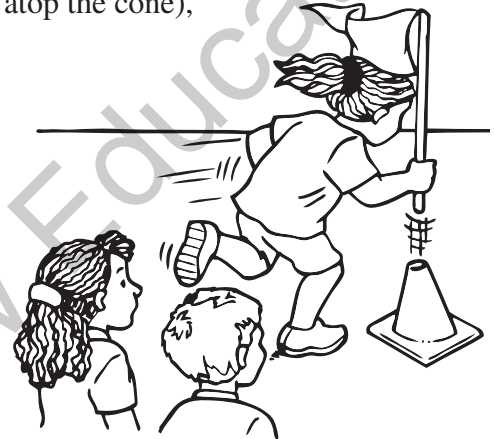




Outdoor Activities

Capture the Flag

1. Invite students to try to capture an object, such as a cone, flag or other piece of play equipment.
2. Place the object in the centre of the playing space (or atop the cone), with students arranged around a marked perimeter.
3. Select a student to act as guard. Other players try to capture the object without getting caught.
4. If it is too easy for players to capture the object, the one who captures it must return to one of the corners of the marked area safely without being tagged.
5. Vary the game by using different objects, different names for the guard and different ways to set up and capture.



Jumping Activities

Give students opportunities to develop coordination and endurance with these jumping activities (with or without skipping-ropes). Challenge students to try different steps and patterns when they jump.

1. Jump with one foot at a time or both feet at the same time.
2. Have students spread their feet apart as they jump.
3. Mark a line on the ground with chalk. Have students stand with both feet on one side of the line. Then jump forwards with both feet over the line. Have students try jumping forwards and backwards.
4. Challenge students to think of their own patterns of movement combining skips, hops, jumps and different kinds of steps. Have students take turns sharing their patterns with the group. Arrange students in a circle or series of lines to follow the student leaders.

