

# What Is This Brain Gym?

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Educational Kinesiology (Edu-K) is a self-directed process developed by Dr. Paul Dennison PhD., who said that "movement is the door to learning". Movement is the natural way in which children learn. There is something about moving the muscles of the body that activates the brain and initiates neurological pathways. To learn things well, you have to feel it in the body & the muscles of the body.

To enhance learning and learning ability, Edu-K uses gymnastics for the brain called Brain Gym. **Brain Gym®** is a learning-readiness program used in schools, homes, and businesses in more than 80 countries around the world. This movement-based program was founded on the research of educators Paul E. Dennison, PhD. and his wife Gail Dennison. It has been honoured by The National Learning Foundation and Reading Excellence Through the Arts, a division of the International Reading Association.

The **26 Brain Gym activities** were studied and developed over a 35 year period by the Dennisons. These movements are developmentally based. They relate to specific and well established reflexes that children normally complete on their own, when given enough early freedom of physical movement and if they have not incurred any injury or stress to inhibit these natural movement experiences.

Our generation, as well as those of our parents and grandparents, did not sit as much as children (or people in general) do in today's sedentary times. Probably at no time in history have children spent so much time sitting and so little time walking, running, climbing, and so on. The Brain Gym activities are effective because they address specific movements on which auditory, visual, and tactile skills depend. Academic success depends on having these auditory and other skills in place. These skills could be called the physical skills (rather than the mental skills) of learning.

Eight of the **key Brain Gym movements** were developed from Dr. Dennison's work with developmental optometrists with whom he shared offices at his reading centers during the 1960s. Five of the movements are directly from, or modifications of, common warm-up movements used by runners and other athletes. Nine of the movements are derived from principles of acupuncture, as they relate to the central nervous system, and as adapted in processes such as applied kinesiology and Touch for Health. The four "Buttons" also introduce visual skills described in developmental optometry. The remaining four are from movement disciplines such as modern dance and postural balancing.

There are four simple steps to get ready to learn. The 26 targeted activities are then used with a clear intention in a five-step balance process. The whole process is simple and yet very effective. It is fun and easy to learn for children and adults alike. The series of movements and the balance process are used to activate the whole brain and to integrate the mind/body connection by strengthening neural networks. The **benefits** are seen in a higher level of potential being achieved in school, in work, in sports, in any learning situation (for child or adult) and an increase in the overall sense of well being.