

# Bewegen in Denemarken

Vanuit verschillende buitenlandse landen hebben we verhalen gekregen hoe men daar omgaat met 'physical activity' zeg maar het extra uur gym. De artikelen uit Denemarken en Frankrijk plaatsen we in het Engels, zoals we ze hebben aangeleverd gekregen

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**I**n 2014 Denmark implemented a large school reform that requires all schools to make sure that all pupils have physical activity on average 45 minutes every day. As you can imagine this is a major change in almost all Danish schools and most schools are still in the process of reaching this goal. Different schools choose different approaches and at the moment we are still trying to learn more about the best ways to address these new challenges. Physical activity can include many different types of activity. The Council on Health and Disease Prevention has categorized physical activity into six different types of activities:

- active breaks
- exercise training
- physical activity integrated in academic subjects
- physical education
- free play and recess
- active transportation.

### Mostly free play

We do not know much about how these different types of physical activity is prioritized by schools on average but it seems that especially free play, recess and transportation are areas that has much more potential to contribute to the total amount of physical activity. Just two years ago only a few schools in Denmark focused in these areas and now every teacher in Denmark has to contribute to the pupil's physical activity in some way. This is probably the biggest change in health/physical activity in schools since 1904 when girls were allowed to participate in PE.

In Denmark PE is a compulsory subject throughout school up until grade 9 (students are

then 15 years old). Most schools have one 90 minute lesson each week and there is a national curriculum that states three areas PE should cover: "Versatile sport participation", "Sport culture and relations" & "Body, training and wellbeing". The national curriculum also states that PE should promote lifelong physical activity which has been the attention of many Danish politicians, parents, teachers and academics for the past decade. Another major change in the school reform in 2014 was that exams were introduced in PE. Up until 2014 there were no exams in PE. This is also a challenge for many teachers because this changes the focus of the PE classes especially for the older pupils.

The newest study on PE in Denmark is before the reform in 2012 and it shows that some of the biggest issues and challenges with PE in Denmark are:

- Polarization: the highly skilled pupils get better, the lower skilled pupils fall further behind.
- Content in PE does not reflect the content in the national curriculum. Some activities (especially soccer) play a disproportionately large role in PE.
- Planning and evaluation of PE is at a lower standard than most other subjects.
- Some goals in the national curriculum are largely disregarded.

### Examples Active breaks

Sort active breaks is also often called 'brain breaks' or 'power breaks'. The active breaks can be used when students have are tired or have difficulty keeping concentration.



Some active breaks are completely detached from the academic teaching and has the sole purpose to give a little respite to restore the mental energy that are important for students to keep the concentration. Other short break activities can be linked to an academic teaching and there could be an overlap between the activities that can be defined as short breaks or physical activity integrated into academic subjects.

These exercises usually takes between one and five minutes and rarely require much preparation. The active breaks can have several different characteristics

### **Heart rate and strength**

Here the intensity is high and students use a lot of energy in a short time. The following activities are examples of short breaks in the heart rate and strength:

- **Catch the fly**  
Students work in pairs. One student (A) is placed behind another (B) holding a ball or a pencil case over the head of (B) outside the field of vision of (B). When (A) releases the ball / pencil case, B(B) must catch the object before it reaches the ground. Catch the fly can also be made in groups of three, where two students struggling to catch the ball / pencil case first. The ball can also be thrown slightly forward. Then it is agreed upon how many times the ball can touch the ground before it must be caught. pushing Students

stand with their backs to each other and push each other without using their arms. The first to lift his/her feet off the ground lost.

- **Borderland**  
Participants go in pairs and stands on either side of a selected line. They grab hold of each other's hands and must now try to pull each other over the line. The exercise can be performed with two major groups on either side of the line. Here, the participants try to help each other as a team to get as many as possible from the opposing team than on their own side without even losing any.

### **Mental short breaks**

Here there is less focus on intensity and high pulse and instead to challenge students' ability to coordinate and remember. A few examples of such activities:

- **Motion Orchestra**  
The teacher draws some notes on the blackboard. Start with four, so participants learn to interpret them, and repeat a few times. Different means different activities such as jumping, sit-ups jump on one leg, shake your arm, Thus combining a small movement dance, which can be repeated and varied, once the participants have learned to decode the system. The exercise can be made harder to distinguish between half notes and whole notes, so playing with pace and tempo changes..
- **The physical alphabet**  
Students work in pairs. A student writes the alphabet in the air with his fingers while counting one number for each letter. He draws A and says 1 – draws B and says 2. They continue until he makes a mistakes and changes.

### **Reduction of arousal**

Often the short breakes are used as a tool when students are dull and need some energy. The opposite may also be true. Have students use to "calm down" and reduce arousal using mindfulness and yoga exercises can be very beneficial. An example of such a short break could be:

- **Mindfulness**  
Participants put a raisin in their mouth. They are instructed to concentrate completely on this raisin without chewing. They must feel how the raisin feels inside the mouth before they begin to chew slowly. As instructed in noticing the taste that is spreading in the mouth, and experience how the raisin in the end goes through the esophagus. The exercise is about practicing how to strengthen the senses and enhance the capacity of the presence and concentration on a single thing. Inhibiting irrelevant thoughts and sensory stimuli.



### Short Social breaks

When educators working with short active breaks are social gains are often mentioned as one of the primary outcomes. Many activities in this genre is based on team building. One example of such tasks could be:

- The Gordian Knot  
Students stand in a circle with his arms crossed over his head. All students goes to the middle and find a hand from two different people and hold on to. The students must the “fix” the circle without letting go of the hands they are holding. The exercise can also be created in which two groups are competing to finish first.

### Physical exercise

A second domain of physical activity is physical exercise. This is not about physical activity associated with the academic teaching but training that stands alone and has the aim to improve students’ motor skills, muscle strength and muscle mass as well as circulatory and metabolic fitness.

Examples of types of activities in this category include:

- outright training in the form of strength training, running and cycling workouts, circuit training
- participation in sporting activities such as ball games, athletics, dance and martial arts

Physical activity integrated in academic subjects (PAIAS)

In contrast to the short breaks are PAIAS activities are integrated into the academic teaching. PAIAS activity is used as a didactic tool in the academic teaching as a way to optimize the learning process. PAIAS activities can be divided into two types of activities.

PAIAS-A. Movement as a pedagogical method of learning. Here, the physical activity serves as

a way of making teaching concrete, rather than abstract. For example:

- Instead of practicing multiplying as an abstract concept students go out into school yard and calculates the number of tiles on the school roo

The intensity of the physical activity integrated PAIAS-A activity is not necessarily high. The exercise aims to provide students with specific bodily experiences, to link academic learning as a support abstract learning.

PAIAS-B. Movement as a physiological stimulus. Here, the purpose of the movement associated with academic teaching is to create a physiological response to physical activity that has a positive effect on student learning, for example. short-term memory and concentration. This type of activity requires a certain intensity to produce the necessary physiological response. It is not necessary to have a very high heart rate, but neither is it enough to stand up instead of sitting down.

- Students connect Danish and English words by running out in the school yard to pick up cards with English words. The students take these cards back to the classroom as fast as they can and combined thme with the correct Danish word.

### Physical education

It is important to emphasize that although PE can contribute to the well-being, academic performance and health of the students Pe is an independent subject with its own objectives, curriculum and methods.

### Free play / pauses

Free play and breaks (breaks also includes recess) is the time when students do not have classes. This part of the school day, students can freely dispose of. For some students physical activity will be an integral part of this part of the school day, while other students will be physically inactive. The free play can be stimulated and / or organized by adults.

### Active transportation

The mode of transport to and from school is important for students’ total amount of physical activity during the day. Modes that contribute positively to health include walking, cycling, using skateboards, etc.

The Danish welfare system is epitomized by a large public sector and universal, egalitarian and generous welfare. These ideals and values also permeate the history of sport in Denmark and also PE. Most activities are compared to many countries inclusive with a low focus on winning/ losing. ■

### kernwoorden:

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