The Power Senses:
The two senses that are responsible for movement are the **vestibular** and **proprioceptive** senses.

The **vestibular sense** (located in the inner ear) recognises whenever the head moves and the intensity and duration of that movement.

All movement involves **proprioception** and the cells responsible are in our muscles and joints. **Proprioception** allows us to know where are body parts are without having to look at them. The proprioception sense is engaged when joints experience traction or compression also called ‘heavy work’.

*Why Are These Senses Important in the Classroom?*

The vestibular and proprioceptive senses have important roles in concentration levels.

Younger students especially find concentrating for 40 minutes very challenging. Their sensory systems seek movement to maintain alertness. For example, restlessness, fidgeting, standing and moving about the room. This can be disruptive to the lesson.

Incorporating planned ‘**movement breaks**’ within lesson plans is an effective way of ‘feeding’ the students’ sensory systems and maintaining their levels of alertness.
### Occupational Therapy Tips – Movement Breaks

#### Movement Strategies:

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<th>Chair Push-ups</th>
<th>Joint Stretching &amp; Compression</th>
<th>Air-filled Cushions</th>
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| • Sit on a chair with your feet on the ground.  
• Put your hands on the sides of the chair.  
• Take your weight through your hands and lift yourself off the chair a few inches.  
• Keep the pose for as long as you can or do a countdown game to make it fun! | • Push back your chair and stand with the desk in front of you.  
• Lift your arms out in front of you and up over your head.  
• Lift your heels off the ground too.  
• Stretch as far up as possible and hold for 10-30 seconds.  
• Press the palms of the hands together and hold.  
• Press head down into spine using hands.  
• Stretch arms across chest and behind back and hold. | • Provides students with the required vestibular and proprioceptive feedback to maintain concentration /alertness.  
• Can be bought in a ‘wedge’ shape to improve seating posture and stability also.  
• Ensure feet are supported.  
• See: [http://www.sensationalkids.ie](http://www.sensationalkids.ie)  
Move ‘N’ Sit Cushion or Disco ‘O’ Sit Cushion |

**Isometrics**

This activity is recommended as a whole group/class exercise.

**Steps:**

1. In a seated position, place your palms together imitating a position of praying. Push your palms against each other for a few seconds, then relax for a few seconds and repeat 3-5 times.

![Isometrics Image](image1.png)

2. Curl the fingers on each hand to form a semi-circle. Rotate one hand toward your body and one hand away from your body, squeezing tightly. Next, interlock your fingers and pull your elbows in opposite directions while keeping your fingers interlocked. Pull and relax 3-5 times.

![Isometrics Image](image2.png)
3. Raise both arms above your head. Clasp your hands and stretch upwards for a few seconds trying to reach the ceiling. Relax and stretch 3-5 times.

4. Shrug your shoulders up close to your neck, trying to touch your earlobes with your shoulders. Relax and repeat 3-5 times.

5. Next, stretch your neck muscles by touching your chest with your chin and your ears to each shoulder. Avoid rotating your head in a circular motion. Add resistance by pushing against your head in each plane of movement.

6. Place your right palm on top of your right knee. Try to push your knee up and push down with your hand, holding for a few seconds. Relax and switch hands/knees and repeat 3-5 times.

7. Finally, place one foot on top of the other. Try to push the bottom foot up and push the foot that is on top downwards. Relax, switch and repeat 3-5 times.

View the above exercises by linking to the NBSS video on sensorimotor strategies that can be used in the classroom.

nbss movement break exercise examples
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