

# Clinician: Kate Kuper

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## Breath

Experience full inhalations and exhalations. Expanding and contracting, inflating and deflating, growing and shrinking, rising and lowering. Do small movements (only the ribcage, arms ascending and descending at the sides or front of the body) and big, whole body. **Rationale: Breathing is the first thing we did when we were born.**

**MOUNTAIN BREATHING:** Relaxation to bring the energy to a calm, centered place

Sit tall, on floor or chair

- “Tie a string” to the top of your head where your hair grows and let your hands float down like autumn leaves
- Keep your back long
- Arms overhead, finger tips of the two middle fingers touching
- Elbows back, shoulders down, form a triangle shape
- Breathe slowly and evenly, in and out through the nose
- Imagine you are a big, wide, still, silent and powerful mountain
- Close your eyes and breath slowly two more times
- Wrists down to knees, and breathe again, eyes still closed
- Slowly open your eyes (“top eyelashes up, bottom eyelashes down”)

### Teaching tips:

- Emphasize the silence and power of the mountains to discourage silliness
- Breathe in silence; No “sound effects”!
- This is a great activity to calm an overexcited group before transitioning into other activities; good for use with people of all ages!

## Tactile

“Tactile Means Touch”

Do four different types of touch. Squeeze, slap, scratch, tap, brush. End with light touch. Begin with firm touch. Do the whole body, front and top down to back and bottom up. You can name the parts of the body, emphasize any concept or curriculum focus, or simply move through the patterns.

Learning through the skin is very important to brain development. It calms you down; wakes you up. “Good touch, bad touch....this is right touch.” **Rationale: When we were first born we felt the touch of our mother and the temperature of the air.**

Suggested: *Brain Bop* Music # 13 or 14

### Activity

*Blind Mirror* - palm-to-palm, facing, sitting ready position or in chairs, both people's eyes are closed. First leader leads. Fingers point up and don't interlace. Follow must be as relaxed as when he is lying in constructive rest position. Trade, without changing position or shape...just pick up where the other left off.

## Core—Distal

Core is you, your trunk, torso, and movement center. Apple core. Strong core. Distal is everything around you distant from your core, at the edges of the body and beyond (distal sounds like “distant.”) Make Os and Xs with the body. Do big reach away, small reach in. Reach to people far from you, making eye contact. Curl into yourself. Alternate.

**Rationale: When you were a baby, you unfolded, began to make eye contact, stretched out.**

## Head—Tail

The *snaky pine* spine connects your head and tail. Move your head many ways: forward and backward (‘yes’), side to side (‘no’, jar lid turning), tilted, circling (puppet string guides your head around, long neck, shoulders far from ears). Move your tailbone side-to-side, forward and backward (like on a swing set), around in circles (hula hoop, both directions) and find your spine. Find the bones in the back, that connect up into your head (find the connecting point by putting your fingers just above the opening to your ears, and between the eyes and at the hollow place at the base of the skull.) Trace the bones down to the triangle of bone between your buns (the sacrum), and below that to your puppy dog wagging tail. Experiment with wagging your tail while on all fours. Say ‘tail’ as you wag. Move your *snaky pine* spine and blend the sounds to discover the word ‘spine’.

Assessing student physical development: Can they “fly” on their stomachs, lifting head, arms and chest off the floor? **Rationale: When you were about 5 months old, you lifted your head. You could “fly” on your tummy.**

## Upper—Lower

“From your waist to the floor, don’t move anymore, but up above, there’s lots to love.” Like moving your arms as a swimmer: backstroke, crawl, breaststroke. Gather the air towards you. Sway your upper body. Bend it side to side. Shake in a circle each way. Punch the sky. Punch slowly and smoothly in front of you. Side to side. One forward and one backward at the same time. Twist above your waist, with arms bent at 90° angles. For more ideas use any variation of twist, swing, circle, bend or stretch. Gather ideas from the students.

**Rationale: This pattern corresponds to rocking in place, pushing up, flipping, and other 9-month-old movement.** Practice kneeling rocking forward (lower body pushes forward) and backward (upper body pushes back) to understand the connection.

## Body Side/Eye Tracking

Usually with challenged learners, the evidence of reading and processing problems shows up starting with this pattern. Provide many variations in both body side and eye tracking, using repetition alternated with novelty.

Trace your spine line. Pretend you are a piece of paper. Fold in half along your spine line and open to make a same on both sides (symmetrical) shape. Extension Activity: Try folding and reopening in different symmetrical shapes.

**Rationale: This pattern corresponds to first crawling. One side moves, then the other. Babies that crawl, follow the movement of their hands with their eyes.**

*The Book* – start in an open, symmetrical shape. Your spine is where the spine of a book would be. Close to one side, open front, close to the other side. Pick up one whole side and close it to the other. Reverse.

*Spiderman* – Climb the wall in front of you, with arms reaching up and down. Don’t travel. This is just like the first crawl on the floor, but done in place up the wall.

### Eye Tracking

*Spiderman* - Follow one hand up and down when you do Spiderman.

*The Book* – follow the thumb of the leading hand as you close side to side.

## Cross Lateral/Vertical Eye Tracking

Crossing the midline of the body.

Crawling - One hand and the opposite knee. Try it forward and backward. Watch for lifting up the knees, not dragging or pushing them. **Rationale: Corresponds to advanced crawling, using opposition.**

Standing Touch Down – One hand touches the opposite knee, or slaps the knee. Switch. Lift the knee up to meet the hand.

## Vestibular

GET DIZZY!

Spinning – eyes opened, mouths closed. Stop your feet when you get dizzy or after 15 seconds. Breathe. Reverse (“go the non-dominate way”). It’s okay to spin. Your brain reorganizes after spinning.

Why do we get dizzy? Your inner ear fluid gets mixed up. We older folks don’t have the same fluidity in the inner ear, which is why we get dizzy and nauseous!

**Rationale: Corresponds to spinning around when still inside the womb!**



### Contact Information

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