



Recipe for Success



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Brain Gym Test Prep Exercises

...creating an information bridge that allows educators easy access to ready to use, research based nutrition information.

University of California and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating

1432 Abbott Street • Salinas, CA 93901

phone 831.759.7350 fax 831.758.3018

http://cemonterey.ucdavis.edu

Testing days are here. You and your students have studied and reviewed for weeks. What else can you do to help them prepare and to achieve success? A survey of local veteran teachers as well as Food and Behavior Research, Cal Tech and Scholastic.com helped to put together this “recipe” for success. Look on the back page for exercises to increase circulation in the brain and enhance cognitive activities (from **The Brain Gym**)

- **Avoid sugar.** The day before, remind students to steer clear of such foods as pasta, potato chips white bread and sugars at the dinner table, and at breakfast on test days. Such foods can induce a “brain fog” that makes it hard to think clearly, while insulin rushes into the bloodstream to counteract the sugar.
- **Eat a banana** rolled in chopped **nuts** for breakfast on test days. Bananas are high in potassium, which helps make neural connections, Almonds & walnuts contain brain-enhancing minerals & amino acids.
- **Exercise briefly.** Cognitive function is improved immediately after just ten minutes of aerobic exercise. To super-charge the student brain, let kids walk up and down the stairs a few times.
- **Make sure students are sitting up straight.** Posture affects the thinking process. (Prove it to yourself by doing math in your head while slouching, looking at the floor and letting your mouth hang open. Then do the mental math while sitting up straight, keeping your mouth closed and looking forward or slightly upwards. You’ll notice that it’s easier to think with the latter posture).
- **Let each student bring a sprig of Rosemary.** This common herb may have a “wake-up” effect on the brain when the scent is inhaled. Give it a try.
- **Give a pep talk.** In a calm and friendly voice, remind students that they are intelligent and well prepared for the exam. Tell them their intelligence has the power to expand and that you believe each time they take a test they will do better than they did before. Research is beginning to bear out the powerful effect on academic performance of positive thinking.

Good Luck to All!

A link for parents, to help their children prepare to be tested:
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=1403>

Top 5 ways teachers prepare their students: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=11319>



It's Spring, and just in time we have these great ideas from Erin Avery, a student in the Masters of Nutritional Science Program at San Jose State.

Her focus is Sports Nutrition, and this tip sheet is part of her volunteer work for the Family Nutrition Program at UCCE-Monterey County.

Excellent guidance for anyone - of any age - going outside for vigorous play.



Eating to Optimize Performance

With the days getting longer and warmer, we tend to turn our attention to outdoor playtime again. Whether it's team sports, running, hiking or biking with your friends and family, it's important to **make sure that your body is properly fueled**, so that your outdoor playtime doesn't feel like outdoor chore time, or worse, turn you off sports all together.

Preparing your body for exercise comes down to a few basic principles: good food choices, timing of meals, and adequate hydration and sleep.

A pre-exercise meal should include plenty of low glycemic foods, such as apples, pears, cherries, a variety of vegetables, beans, and whole grain breads. These foods provide the type of energy that can fuel the body for an hour or more of exercise.

To avoid feeling full and uncomfortable when it comes time to get active, **meals should be eaten two hours before exercise**, and should be low in fat and protein, which take longer to digest.

Processed foods, such as many fast foods, should be avoided. These foods tend to be loaded with fat, sugar and salt, which are a triple whammy to performance, requiring longer digestion times and predisposing one to dehydration and energy crashes.

After exercise, be sure to refuel your muscles with a quick carbohydrate snack, such as a banana, carrots, granola bar, or peanut butter sandwich.

Proper hydration is critical for a working body, and inadequate hydration can lead to headaches and fatigue. Another critical factor that people often overlook is **adequate sleep**. Sleep is the time when the body repairs muscle injuries and disposes of wastes accumulated during the day. Lack of sleep slows energy production which hurts physical performance.

Taking a little time and thought to prepare for your outdoor activities will enable you to get the most out of your playtime, which can help you **feel good all the time!**



In March, be BRAVE and eat Something Green

Can you un-scramble the names of these vegetables?



Peas are green. They're a good source of protein and calcium, nearly fat-free, and high in fiber and Vitamin C: a healthful food for any season.

Guacamole? Not! It's "Pea-camole" and it's good...

Students can prepare this dish in class:

1. **Puree** in a blender: ¼ bunch cilantro leaves, 1 clove of garlic, 1 jalapeño pepper.
2. **Add and puree:** 1-lb defrosted green peas, 1-2 TBS olive oil, 2-TBS fresh lime or lemon juice, ½ tsp ground cumin, salt to taste (as little as possible).
3. **Put into a bowl, let set** an hour or so to blend flavors and **top** with minced green onions and chopped tomatoes.
4. **Serve** with baked tortilla chips for dipping.

Yum! Guilt-free.



PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD

1. Give each student an fresh English pea pod like the one above. Tell them to **write down** their **observations** in this activity.
2. **Guess** how many peas will be in the pod.
3. Open the pod; **count** the peas. How many?
4. Give a half-cup measure to each 3 students. In these teams:
5. **Guess** how many peas needed to fill the cup.
6. Fill the cup and **count** the peas. How many?
7. Using information from steps 3 & 6, now **calculate** how many pea pods will be needed to provide ½ cup of peas.

This activity meets a Key CA Standard in 3rd grade math: Algebra & Functions 3AF2I

Eggs can be green! Will you eat **Green Eggs & Ham**? Will you eat them Sam-I-am?

Eggs are a great food: low in cost and calories and rich in high quality protein (1 whole egg has about 68 calories and 5.5 grams of protein). Eggs are also rich in antioxidants.

For the K-3 crowd, an **fun after-testing season class treat** try this activity (A helper would be good):

Discuss what protein does for the body and let students test their strength using gallon jugs with different amounts of water in them. (P.4, Happy Healthy Me) At the same time, a helper sets up the food activity. (P.9 Happy Healthy Me)



1. Put into **individual reclosable plastic bag: 1 hard-cooked egg, cut in chunks; 1-tsp low-fat mayonnaise, dash of garlic salt, tiny drop of green food color.**

2. Give sealed bags to students and ask them to mash the eggs inside with their fingers through the bags, to make egg salad.

3. Cut off one corner of the bag with clean scissors.

4. Squeeze egg salad onto **whole wheat crackers** and top with a little square of **thin-sliced ham.**

5. Serve. As students enjoy their snack, teacher and helper read "**Green Eggs & Ham**" very dramatically, as a little play.

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culteet

lettuce
cucumber
cabbage
chile pepper
asparagus
artichoke
chard
spinach
green beans
zucchini
peas
broccoli





From **The Brain Gym**: exercises to increase circulation in the brain and enhance cognitive activities

Balance Button

This exercise helps with **thinking, relaxing for test taking**, and organizational skills. While sitting down, touch two fingers to the indentation at the base of the skull, behind the ear. Rest the other hand on your navel. Imagine breathing the energy up through the body, slowly and deeply. After a minute, switch hands and hold your two fingers behind the other ear.

The Elephant

This exercise helps with **math and spelling skills**. The Elephant will also help you to listen better. Stand up, bending your knees and 'glue' your head to your shoulder and point across the room to the left. Use your ribs to move your whole upper body as you trace a Lazy 8 on its side. Look past your fingers. Then, repeat with the other side.

If you have the student practice spelling his or her spelling words in the air, it helps him or her to remember them.

Administrators and Teachers: do you feel discouraged that your hard work is not yet reaping the harvest of success you know will come eventually?

Those close enough to see your efforts know you are on the right track.



Remember that- on visiting Harrow School - October 29, 1941-

Winston Churchill spoke:

“But for everyone ... I am addressing myself to the School ... this is the lesson: Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never — in nothing, great or small, large or petty — never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield”

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The University of California Cooperative Extension's Youth Nutrition Education Program is for teachers, youth program coordinators, staff and counselors working with students at schools with 50% or more participation in the Free and Reduced School Meal Plan, in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. Our goal is to encourage students to try many different foods, eat plenty of nutritious fruits and vegetables and enjoy appetizing and nutritious snacks, especially whole grain snacks that they can prepare themselves.

UCCE offers free on-site workshops, for teachers or staff, free ongoing program support and free curriculum - choose from a variety of educator-developed selections geared toward helping your class to achieve AYP standards. Partner with Youth FSNEP to practice math and language skills for testing using activities with nutrition content.

For more information call Kathleen at 831.759.7373.

