

## BENEFITS

---

Calms and relaxes. Develops trust and ability to give and take. A great group exercise and a good reward.

## TIME

---

10 to 15 minutes

## ACTIVITY

---

- Stand in a close circle, turn to the right, and sit down in a cross-legged position. (This can also be done in chairs.)
- Place your hands on the back of the person in front of you.
- Begin by making rain on the person's back - gently tapping the back.
- Now, make it rain all the way down the back - fingers slide gently down the back.
- Then, there is very light thunder - gently tapping the back.
- Then, lightning - draw lightning strikes.
- Now, draw big puffy rain clouds.
- Brush those clouds away - gently sweeping hands across the back.
- Now, the sun comes out - draw a big sun with a happy face and sunglasses!
- Then, place your palms on the back, close your eyes, and feel the warm hands. Imagine yourself in a beautiful or favorite place with the sun warming your back.
- When the sun comes out the flowers begin to grow—draw a beautiful flower for your friend.
- Now, draw either a gift or a secret message on the other person's back. Whisper into the person's ear what the gift or secret message is.

## VARIATIONS & INTEGRATION

---

- Create imagery on the back that relates to a specific time of year, current event, or academic theme such as holidays, snow, a parade, a nature scene.
- Have students share the gifts they gave and received, or the messages they sent to one another.
- Have students draw the image on paper after drawing it on the back, or write the message down so they can remember it.

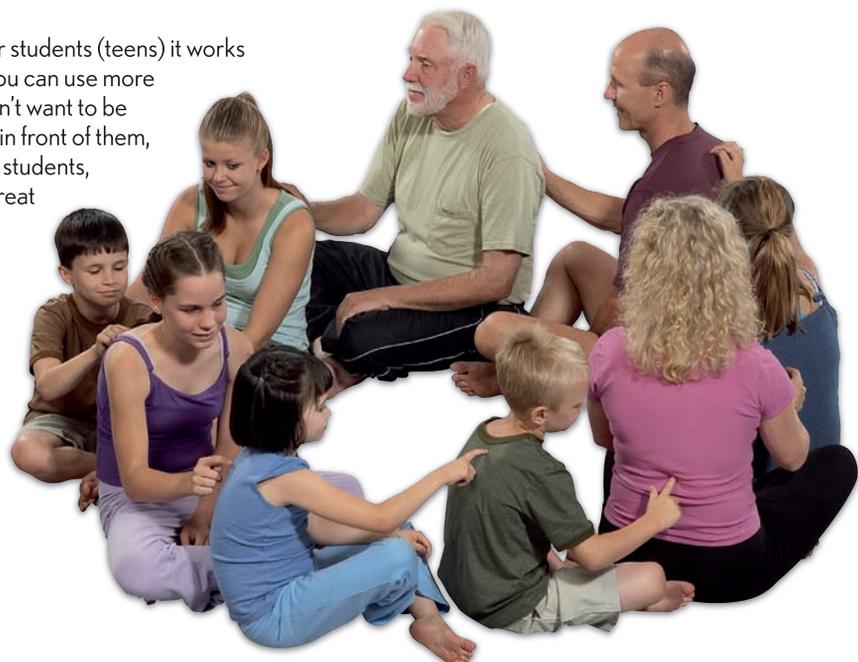
## NOTES

---

Bringing awareness to the back elicits a relaxation response in the parasympathetic nervous system.

This activity works well for all students. With older students (teens) it works best if boys and girls form their own circles, and you can use more sophisticated imagery. Respect students who don't want to be touched by having them only draw on the person in front of them, or letting them sit and watch the group. For older students, a group shoulder massage in a circle is a special treat before or after a test—or for a relaxation break! Children request this activity all the time!

# BACK DRAWING





# PULSE COUNT



---

## BENEFITS

Quiets and calms. Develops inner listening and personal awareness. Educates about heart and circulatory system. Teaches about bodily rhythms and cycles of nature.

---

## TIME

2 to 20 minutes

---

## ACTIVITY

- Take two fingers to the side of the mouth.
- Tip head slightly back and draw a line down with fingers into groove along the neck.
- Press gently to find pulse.
- Raise other hand when the pulse is found.
- Count pulse beats inwardly to self.
- Now, count your pulse for 15 seconds. Later, expand to 30 seconds and then one minute.
- Ask students what their count was. (Counts will vary and some students may have trouble counting or may make up exceptionally low or high counts).

---

## VARIATIONS & INTEGRATION

- Run in place for one minute, then take pulse again. Discuss the reasons the pulse is different after running.
- Now try the opposite. Relax your muscles, slow your breathing and concentrate on “thinking” your heart rate lower. Try playing relaxing music. What happens to the pulse?
- Time the group for 30 seconds, then have them do the math to calculate their pulse rate per minute.
- Older students can track their pulse and daily activities. Then graph results, determine averages, and explore relationship between activities and pulse.
- Take pulse when students come in from recess and again after a 5-minute relaxation.
- Take pulse when students are watching television, playing video games, and so on.
- Use as a introduction to health lesson on the heart and/or stress. Include information on healthy resting and active heart rates.
- Show physical education charts for healthy aerobic heart training rates. Calculate students’ optimal training heart rate for their age.

---

## NOTES

Pulse Count and breath awareness are simple biofeedback tools for determining healthy activities and for training the sympathetic nervous system to be less reactive to stressors. Athletes use pulse and breathing rate information to set their workout difficulty levels, and to gauge their condition and recovery rates.

An 8-10 year old child’s resting pulse rate is usually about 90 beats/minute, with rates varying from 60 to 110. Resting pulse rates much above 120 beats/minute or much below 50 beats/minute are uncommon and should be checked by a doctor.

## BENEFITS

Energizes and grounds. Quickly warms the body. Develops strength, endurance, and flexibility. Good confidence builder before a test or a major challenge.

## TIME

6 seconds to 1 minute

## ACTIVITY

- Stand with legs hip-width apart.
- Take right leg back, placing the knee on floor (bent-knee version), or take right foot back 3 to 4 feet with heel off floor, and straighten back leg (straight-leg version).
- Front knee is over front ankle.
- Hips face forward.
- Take arms overhead, palms facing each other and fingers extending.
- Lift belly, heart, and head.
- Repeat with right leg forward.

(If the knee is uncomfortable, double up mat or place padding under it.)

## VARIATIONS & INTEGRATION

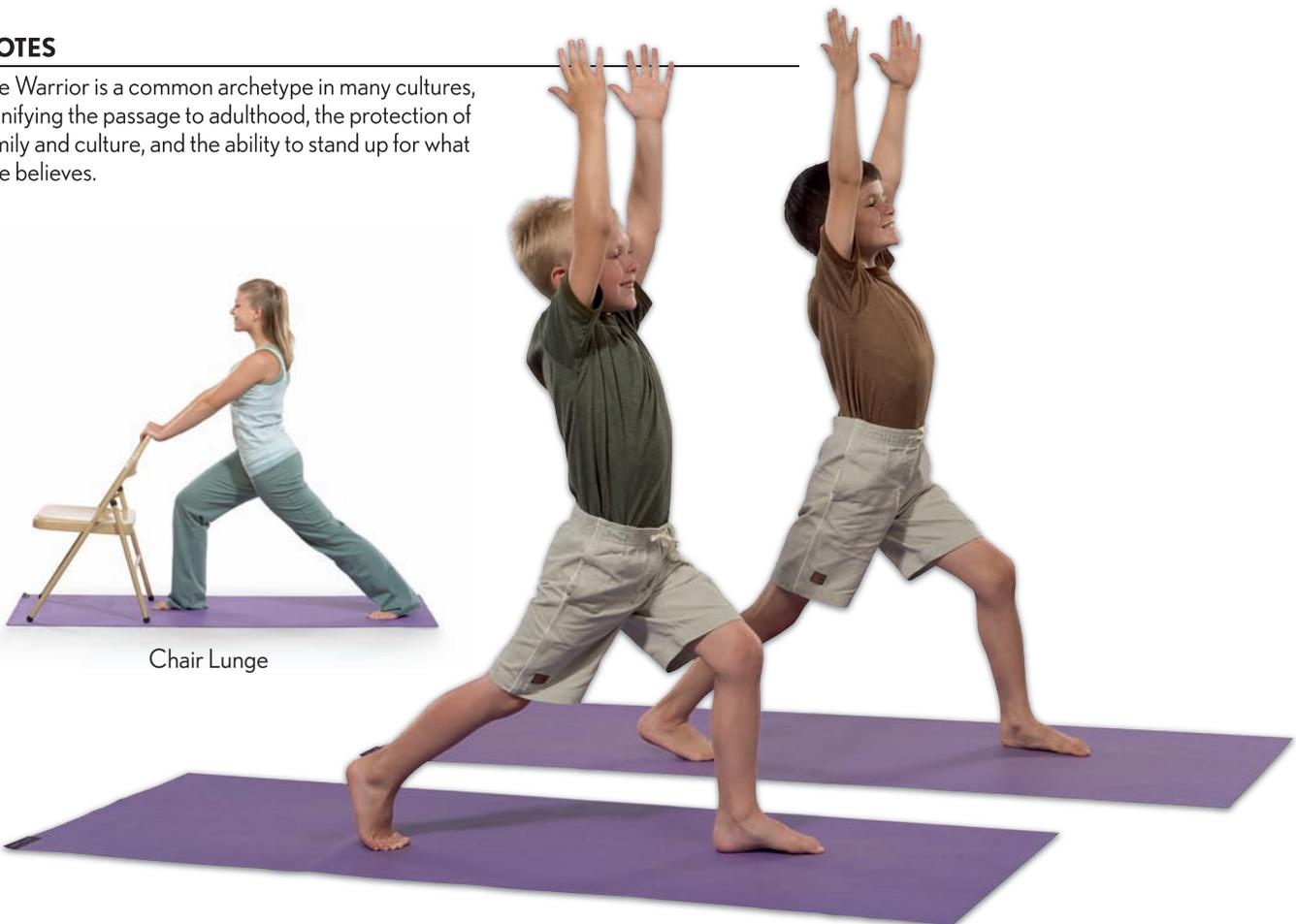
- Combine Warrior I pose with Strong Voice activity.
- Have students pair up and face each other in Warrior I, so they can see each other's strength.
- As students gain strength, increase the holding time.
- Useful cue: "Send lasers from your belly out through your fingers."
- Chair Lunge: For more support or in classroom situations, have students hold onto the back of a chair.

## NOTES

The Warrior is a common archetype in many cultures, signifying the passage to adulthood, the protection of family and culture, and the ability to stand up for what one believes.

# WARRIOR I

BENT KNEE,  
STRAIGHT-LEG  
AND CHAIR LUNGE



Chair Lunge



# WOOD CHOPPER

## BENEFITS

Releases tension. Energizes and stimulates the nervous system. Develops focus. Combined with use of voice, helps students find their personal power.

## ACTIVITY

- Stand with feet a little wider than hip-width apart and knees slightly bent.
- Take arms overhead with hands together as if holding an ax.
- Imagine a piece of wood on the ground in front of you.
- On a count of three, swing hands down to chop the imaginary piece of wood.
- Make a loud “Huh!” sound as your ax hits the imaginary wood.

## VARIATIONS & INTEGRATION

- Make the “Huh” sound come from the deepest part of the belly. Ask if students feel a difference doing it this way.
- Have students picture the piece of wood on the floor in front of them. Encourage them to keep their focus on the wood as they chop down so they don’t miss it.
- Have individual students lead the pose in front of the classroom.
- Ask students to “energize” (firm or strengthen) their body before the activity and observe the difference.
- Combine with Pulse Count Activity before and after to check the effect of the pose.
- Combine with Strong Voice Activity to develop students’ personal power.
- Use before a test to make students more alert and/or to reduce anxiety and tension.

## NOTES

