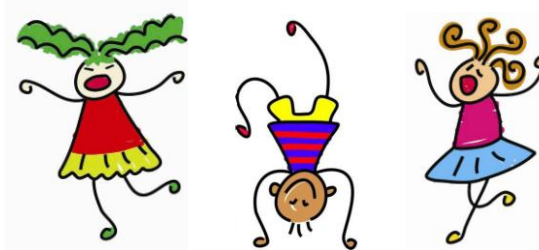


# Veggie Power: Specific “Brain-Based” Movement Benefits

Part of the *Smart Fitness Workout*  
by RONNO and Liz J-T



## Movements

*[Feet shoulder width apart/Bend those knees/And bounce up and down....Jump, jump, jump]*

*[Up on your toes....down on your heels...toes up/March on those heels]*

*[Feet flat, march on the spot/Knees high]*

*[Jump, jump, jump, Veggie Power!]*

*[Jumping jacks]*

*[Jogging on the spot/ Feet wide apart.../Feet back together]*

*[Arms out in front, bend arms in towards your chest/Roll one arm over the other]*

## Benefits

### Homologous Movement Pattern:

Involves symmetrical movement of both feet and hands at the same time. It supports and stimulates development of the limbic system (emotions, relationships, organization).<sup>1</sup>

Elongating the calf muscle by lengthening and shortening it activates the brain stem and helps with focus.<sup>2</sup>

### Contralateral Movement Pattern

Jumping is an important skill. Children need to learn to bounce first, then push off with both feet, knees bent, to propel themselves upwards.<sup>1</sup>

### Homologous Movement Pattern

Jumping jacks involve symmetrical movement of arms and legs, helping develop a sense of the upper and lower halves of the body.

### Contralateral Movement Pattern

Jogging with feet wide apart and then back together develops body awareness through varying movements and changing speed.

### Contralateral Movement Pattern

Here is a simple movement sequence involving the cross-lateral movement of rolling the arms in a variety of different spaces (i.e., in front of the body, over the head, down the side, and down to the toes).

[Hop on one foot/Hop forward/...hop back/...hope on the spot with eyes closed]

### **Homologous Movement Pattern**

Hopping is a fundamental movement skill. Hopping on one foot allows the body to learn to shift weight and to balance.

[...climb up a really tall ladder/Reach high with your arms]

### **Contralateral Movement Pattern**

Here are movements involving the coordination and working-together of limbs. They allow children the opportunity to imagine and explore, while orienting their bodies in different spaces.

[...arms out to your side/...spin around in little circles....spin the other way/...wiggle your arms up and down]

Spinning is a natural movement for children. When the body moves, the brain records that information and forms its own understanding of what it feels like to be in and out of balance. The brain is craving these kinds of movements in order to stimulate the **Vestibular System** (eye-ear connection) and establish its sense of balance. <sup>3</sup>

[Touch opposite hand to opposite ankle]

### **Contralateral Movement Pattern**

[Reach your hands way up....And start jumping]

### **Homologous Movement Pattern**

As children listen and move to music, millions of brain neurons are firing and connecting with other neurons. What a terrific way to build a healthy brain and body!

### **References:**

<sup>1</sup> Carol Anne Erickson, *Movement Exploration Series*, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Paul Dennison and Gail Dennison, *Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition*, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Carla Hannaford, *Smart Moves: Why Learning is Not All in Your Head*, 1995

