

Soft Stretch Circle - Levels A & B

STAY ACTIVE

To support students to experience calm, safety, and self-kindness through gentle stretching and breathing. The activity builds early body awareness, emotional regulation, and trust in a predictable, low-demand way. Linked to Venus in the Playful Astronauts journey, this activity reinforces that softness, openness, and calm are quiet forms of strength.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to experience gentle movement and stillness in a calm group setting.

Students aim to respond to slow breathing and soft body movements with adult support.

Students aim to listen to or experience kind, calming words during the activity.



Success Criteria

I can take part by moving, watching, or listening.

I can copy or experience gentle stretches with support.

I can pause my body and breathe slowly with guidance.

I can stay with the group for part or all of the activity.



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Duration: 8 - 12 minutes

Objective

To support students to experience calm, safety, and self-kindness through gentle stretching and breathing. The activity builds early body awareness, emotional regulation, and trust in a predictable, low-demand way. Linked to Venus in the Playful Astronauts journey, this activity reinforces that softness, openness, and calm are quiet forms of strength.

Players

Whole class or small groups

Suitable for 3 - 16 students

Played seated, standing, or chair-based in a circle or shared space

What You Need

Soft floor space, mats, or chairs

Optional: quiet background music or nature sounds

Optional: simple visual cards showing stretches or teacher can model stretches

Optional: simple affirmation visuals

AAC devices, switches, or communication boards as required

Setup

Arrange students in a small circle or spaced comfortably around the room.

Ensure students are seated or positioned safely on the floor, chairs, or in wheelchairs.

Introduce the activity using calm, simple language:

“We will move softly.”

“We will breathe slowly.”

“We can be gentle.”

Briefly connect to the Venus theme in accessible terms:

“Venus reminds us it is okay to be gentle.”

Reassure students that they may join by moving, watching, or listening.

Confirm AAC devices are switched on and open to basic calm or feeling words.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Calm Breathing

Invite students to sit or stand comfortably.

Model slow breathing using simple cues:

“Breathe in.”

“Breathe out.”

Use visual hand movements to support timing.

Repeat 2 - 3 times, allowing students to watch or copy.

Step 2: Gentle Stretching with Kind Language

Guide students through a small number of predictable stretches.

Model each movement slowly and clearly.

Examples include:

- **Reach up** – arms lift slowly
Adult says: “Safe arm lifts.”
- **Self-hug** – wrap arms gently around the body
Adult says: “Cared for yourself.”
- **Side stretch** – one arm reaches gently overhead and reach to one side, then switch
Adult says: “Slow reach over the top.”
- **Butterfly arms** – arms gently open and close in front of the body
Adult says: “Focus on slow sweeping movements.”

Students may:

Move fully or partially

Copy one part of the movement

Watch quietly

Activate AAC

The adult narrates calmly and avoids rushing.

Step 3: Pause and Breathe

Between stretches, pause movement.

Guide one slow breath in and one slow breath out.

Allow quiet moments with no talking if helpful.

End the activity with hands resting calmly by the side of the body or resting on laps.



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Debrief / Reflection

Keep reflection gentle and brief.

Ask one question at a time with wait time:

“Did your body feel calm when stretching?”

“Which stretch did you like the most?”

Accept responses through eye gaze, gestures, AAC, facial expression, or body movement.

Reinforce the message:

“Being gentle helps our bodies feel safe.”

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through calm participation and shared stillness.

Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation, comfort, and emotional safety.

Adjustments may include:

Allowing participation through breathing only.

Using the same stretches every time for predictability.

Offering tactile supports such as cushions or weighted lap pads.

Reducing or removing music if sound is overwhelming.

Allowing students to take breaks and rejoin when ready.

AAC-Specific Supports

Prepare AAC in Advance

Ensure access to symbols such as: calm, breathe, safe, okay, finished.

Use single-message switches if appropriate.

Model AAC Consistently

Adults activate AAC symbols while naming calm actions or words.



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Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

All stretches can be adapted for seated or chair-based participation.

Upper-body-only movement is always acceptable.

Ensure clear space for wheelchairs and mobility aids.

Accept watching and listening as valid participation.

Respect each student's comfort, pace, and range of movement.

Teacher Notes

"Soft Stretch Circle – Levels A & B" supports early emotional regulation, body awareness, joint attention, and trust. The activity is not about correct stretching or verbal affirmations, but about experiencing calm, gentle movement and kind language in a safe, predictable way. It works beautifully as a transition, reset, or end-of-day routine and strongly reinforces the Venus theme that gentleness and openness are strengths.

