

Soft Stretch Circle - Levels C & D

STAY ACTIVE

To support students to explore vulnerability through soft movement, breathing, and affirmations. Gentle stretching helps students connect with their bodies, calm their minds, and practise self-acceptance. 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 move their bodies gently and safely during stretching activities.

Students aim to listen to calming language that supports emotional safety and acceptance.

Students aim to practise kind self-talk by listening to or repeating positive affirmations.



Success Criteria

I can copy gentle stretches in a safe and respectful way.

I can use slow breathing to help my body feel calm.

I can listen to or say kind words about myself during the activity.



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Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

Objective

To support students to explore vulnerability through soft movement, breathing, and affirmations. Gentle stretching helps students connect with their bodies, calm their minds, and practise self-acceptance. 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 4 - 16 students

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

What You Need

Soft floor space or yoga mats

Optional: calm background music or nature sounds

Visual pose cards or teacher modelling

Affirmation cards or simple sentence starters

AAC devices or communication boards as required

Setup

1. Arrange students in a circle or spaced safely around the room, ensuring everyone has room to move arms and legs.

2. Revisit the Venus theme briefly:

- “Venus teaches us that being gentle and open is okay.”
- “We don’t need to rush. We can move softly.”

3. Explain the activity clearly:

- “We will do soft stretches.”
- “We will breathe slowly.”
- “We will listen to kind words.”

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

5. Confirm AAC devices are on and open to feelings, affirmations, or calm words pages.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Begin with Calm Breathing

1. Invite students to sit or stand comfortably.
2. Guide slow breathing together:
 - “Breathe in through your nose, smell the flowers.”
 - “Breathe out through your mouth, blow out the candles.”
3. Repeat 2 - 3 times, modelling slow, calm breathing.

Step 2: Gentle Stretching with Affirmations

Guide students through each stretch slowly, modelling clearly. Pair each movement with an affirmation.

Example stretches include:

- **Reach to the sky:** arms stretch up slowly
 - Affirmation: “I am safe.”
- **Self-hug:** arms wrap gently around the body
 - Affirmation: “I am cared for.”
- **Butterfly stretch:** feet together, knees gently moving (or arms gently flapping if seated)
 - Affirmation: “It’s okay to feel.”
- **Side stretch:** one arm reaches over the head, then switch
 - Affirmation: “I can take my time.”

Students may repeat the affirmation softly, listen quietly, or use AAC or gesture.

Step 3: Pause and Breathe

Between stretches, pause to breathe together:

- One slow breath in
- One slow breath out
- Use calm voice cues and allow silence if helpful.

Debrief / Reflection

Ask one gentle question at a time, allowing multiple response modes:

- “How does your body feel now?”
- “Which stretch felt nice?”
- “Which kind words did you like?”

Reinforce the message:

“Being gentle with ourselves helps us feel safe and calm.”



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Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through calm participation, listening, and self-kindness.

Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation and comfort during movement.

Adjustments include:

- Allow students to complete only breathing or affirmations without movement.
- Use predictable, repeated stretches to reduce uncertainty.
- Offer tactile supports such as a soft cushion or weighted lap pad.
- Reduce music volume or remove music entirely if needed.
- Allow students to take breaks and rejoin when ready.



AAC-Specific Supports

1. Prepare AAC in Advance

- Pages with: calm, safe, breathe, okay, help, happy

2. Model AAC Use

- Teacher selects symbols while speaking affirmations

3. Supported Participation

- Students may:
 - Select an affirmation
 - Indicate “more” or “finished”
 - Use eye gaze or gesture

4. AAC Reflection

- Ask: “How do you feel now?”
- Students respond using AAC, pointing, or facial expression



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STAY
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Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

- All stretches can be adapted for seated or chair-based participation.
- Encourage upper-body movements for students with limited mobility.
- Ensure clear space for wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- Accept listening and visual participation as valid engagement.
- Respect individual pace, comfort, and movement range.

Teacher Notes

“Soft Stretch Circle – Levels C & D” supports emotional regulation, body awareness, and positive self-talk. It works well as a transition, reset, or end-of-day activity. Linked to the Venus theme, it reinforces that vulnerability, gentleness, and calm presence are strengths that help students feel safe, connected, and ready to learn.

