



# *Juggling And Whole Brain Learning*

## **1. Juggling exercises and integrates the “right” and “left” brain.**

When you first learn to juggle, you are breaking the steps down into small learning steps. You are using what psychologists call the left brain, the logical, analytic, and narrowly focused side. Once you have learned how to juggle, you move into “right” brained thinking, the side that is more intuitive and holistic. When this happens, juggling becomes automatic and relaxing. Some call it a moving meditation. The left and right movement across the body literally changes our focus from left to right and back again.

## **2. Research has shown that there is a direct relationship between hand-eye coordination and the ability to read and write.**

Schools are teaching juggling as a way to enhance academic learning. The eye crosses midline and the movement improves concentration, encourages sequencing, and increases tracking.

## **3. Recent research has found that it is never too late to grow dendrites or connective cells in the brain.**

Nerve cells are designed to be stimulated by new input which in turn builds a richer brain structure. New learning creates a reserve of dense connections partially protecting us from cell loss associated with Alzheimer’s disease. Researchers say that the brain benefits the most from learning that which is “exotic and unusual” — juggling — what could be more exotic!

## **4. Juggling is a self-esteem booster.**

Juggling gives kids and adults tangible evidence of accomplishment. When students can get up and perform successfully for adults or other students, self esteem soars. Learning this newly acquired, yet heretofore seemingly impossible skill, causes all of us to take a second look at the other things we thought we couldn’t do. It challenges all our other beliefs about what is possible.

## **5. Students who get up and move around energetically on a regular basis return to academic tasks refreshed and will learn better as a result.**

A program of classroom breaks can be set up and run by the students themselves. Because students work at their own pace, with their own equipment and in an environment that reinforces effort and accomplishment the activity is completely safe and non-disruptive.

## **6. Juggling turns everyone into a participant.**

We tend to sort ourselves out around the age of 12 into spectators and participants. With juggling, everyone plays. Juggling is non-competitive when done individually, and requires cooperation when two or more work together. For many adults, it is the first new physical skill they have learned in a long time.

## **7. Juggling is joyful.**

Through the context of play, people have always learned best. Juggling breaks people out of their mental ruts and helps them be open to new possibilities and ideas.

**8. Juggling offers an effective “brain break” similar to the effect of sleeping on a problem.**

Juggling is being used by businesses to help increase creativity and innovative problem solving.

**9. A large percentage of students come to school as “couch potatoes” and the typical classroom setting turns them into “desk potatoes.”**

Juggling gets students up and moving bringing much needed oxygen to the brain.

**10. Juggling is an activity at which males and females can be equally adept, and where size and strength are not advantages.**

Everyone participates, even those who are usually side-lined by athletics. Because juggling is a subjective art/sport, it is hard to make negative comparisons about the skill of others. Praise is built into the process.

**11. Because you can only learn to juggle step by step, juggling is a great model for learning in general.**

We learn to juggle drop by drop. It is not through success, but through many small mistakes (drops) that we learn to juggle. We learn from these mistakes and keep on trying until we accomplish the skill. Through juggling we learn that with practice we can accomplish great things.

**12. Juggling takes little space.**

Students will not require more space than their own classroom and possibly a small piece of a hallway or a bit of playground once they move on beyond scarves. Adults can go off discretely to a side office and silently practice with scarves. The equipment is absolutely transportable.

**13. Juggling provides a great deal of carry-over to learning other physical skills.**

Many athletes have learned that juggling improves reflexes and spatial awareness, accuracy in throwing, confidence in catching and brings an innate sense of grace and rhythm.

**14. If students become involved in the teaching process, they learn a great deal more than if they are simply taught a skill by a teacher.**

Juggling isn't just for the athlete or the artist. Everyone is a student, as there is always more to learn. Everyone can become a teacher and students gain by teaching adults their newly acquired skill.

**15. Juggling is a perfect metaphor for life in general.**

We are all continually being asked to juggle more projects, priorities, and people. Learning to juggle is a perfect way to alleviate stress from our mental balancing acts.

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