



## CLASS 13 | DID YOU HEAR THAT?

Teaches the vital role hearing health plays to cognitive vitality, with suggested auditory exercises.

### TBH FOCUS

 SHARPEN SKILLS

### SKILLS WORKED

       

### SBBT

 PAIR UP

### YOU WILL NEED

- Music source and speakers
- Recordings of sounds (see Resources)
- Recordings of short stories or short story reading (see Resources)
- *Now Do It!* worksheets and *TBH Takeaway* handouts, enough for each student. Distribute to distance learners ahead of class
- Video conferencing technology if modifying for virtual delivery

 **Expert Opportunity!** Invite a colleague or volunteer with expertise in auditory health to co-lead the class.



## WELCOME TO CLASS!

- Welcome any new students using the *Welcome to the TBH Course* introduction.
- Introduce today's class.

Today's topic is "Did You Hear That?" Our TBH Blueprint focus is the "Sharpen Skills" action point. We will learn why good hearing health matters to our thinking and long-term brain vitality, even when we may have some changes in our hearing. We will pair up to work out our listening skills as well.

We will be working on the following thinking skills today:

 Perception       Attention       Speedy Thinking       Nimbleness  
 Verbal Skills       Memory       Problem Solving       Executive Control



## TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

5 MINUTES

- Lead this upbeat, seated warm-up to build focus, energy, and get everyone ready to learn.
- Encourage class to count along and support one another.
- See the *TBH Let's Get It Started!* playlist for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid noisy distractions.



## TBH LET'S GET IT STARTED!

CONTINUED

We are going to begin with *TBH Let's Get it Started!* This quick warmup is a wonderful way to get focused, build energy and get us ready to learn. We'll do this right at our seats at the beginning of every class. Just watch what I do and follow along. And today, let's pay special attention to the sounds that we make together as we get it started.

### FEET GET STARTED!

- ▶ Tap toes on both feet, up and down. 10 repetitions. Count together 1 to 10.
- ▶ Alternate toe taps. 10 repetitions. Count backward together 10 to 1.

### LEGS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Stamp feet on the ground, alternating feet. Make "noise" with group.
- ▶ Gently kick legs out from the knee, alternating legs. 10 repetitions. Count together from A to J.
- ▶ March in place, alternating legs. 10 repetitions. If your class is physically able to march in place safely while standing, you may choose that option. Count backwards from 20 by 2's (20, 18, 16...)

### ARMS GET STARTED!

- ▶ Gently shake arms, open and close hands.
- ▶ Circle wrists a few times in clockwise and counterclockwise.
- ▶ Hold arms straight out in front, shoulder level, palms facing down. Slowly lower both hands to thighs and then raise them back to shoulder level. 5 repetitions. Count by 2's (2, 4, 6, 8, 10).
- ▶ Shrug shoulders up and down, with hands on knees. 5 repetitions. Count backwards from 5 to 1.

### VOICES GET STARTED!

- ▶ Say "OHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "EHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "AHHHHHHHHHHH." Have group say sound with you. Hold for a few seconds.
- ▶ Say "OH – EH – AH." Hold each sound for a few seconds. 3 repetitions.
- ▶ Say "The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue." Repeat this famous acting voice exercise with the class, focusing on articulation and participation. 3 repetitions.

### BREATH GETS STARTED!

- ▶ Slow focus to bring awareness to sitting still in chair.
- ▶ Take a deep breath in through the nose.
- ▶ Exhale out through the mouth.
- ▶ Give selves big hug, wrapping arms across waist and squeezing gently, as able.
- ▶ Thank selves and send some "TBH love" to our brains!

**Great job, everyone! We are started up and ready to go!**



## BRAIN PLAY | TELEPHONE GAME

5 MINUTES

- Lead this quick cognitive warm up to build attention, processing speed, nimbleness and other cognitive skills, as well as group connection.
- Gather your class in a circle. Students can remain seated.
- Play the telephone game. Start by whispering a “message” to the student on your immediate right (see suggested prompts below). That student will whisper and repeat exactly what you said with the person on their right, continuing around until the last person or the message is “lost.”
- The last person should say out loud what they were told. Compare how the message changed as it was passed along the “telephone.”
- Keep the game moving at a moderate pace. Do as many rounds as time allows.
- For virtual delivery, replace the telephone game with “Musical Cheers.” Play short bursts of music. When the music stops, students race to be the first to call out “Cheers.” Vary the music volume from quiet to normal to build listening skills and reaction times.

**Now let’s move to our “Brain Play.” Research shows that working against the clock is a great way to keep our thinking focused, fast and nimble. Today’s Brain Play is called “Telephone Game.” This one may be familiar to many of you! We are going to pass a “message” along the circle and see if what the first person says and then hears is what the last person says! I’m going to start by whispering a sentence or phrase to (name of the person on your right). Then, (s/he) will whisper and repeat exactly what I said to (name of the person to their right). We will keep going that way until we get all around the circle – or until we seem to have lost the message! The last person to get the message will share it with all of us. We are going to play at a good pace, so be sure to focus and listen closely when it’s your turn.**

### SUGGESTED TELEPHONE GAME MESSAGE PROMPTS

**I am certain you will remember what I am saying.**

**I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells. (Dr. Seuss)**

**The true art of memory is the art of attention. (Samuel Johnson)**

**Whether you think you can or think you can’t, you are right. (Henry Ford)**

**We don’t stop playing because we grow old, we grow old  
because we stop playing. (George Bernard Shaw)**



## LEARN THE TBH SCIENCE

5 MINUTES

- Present the science behind this class.
- Allow for brief discussion of the science with your students.

**Our focus today is on hearing health. Hearing is critical to clear thinking and to memory. If we can’t hear something clearly, we can’t understand it. And if we don’t hear it, we definitely won’t remember it! And good hearing really matters to our social life. Poor hearing makes it harder to socialize and can put us at risk for isolation and loneliness.**



Taking care of our health is an important part of staying well, especially as we age. Most people have some degree of hearing loss starting around age 50. In addition, cognitive changes can make it harder to hold focus. This can affect listening, making it harder to follow conversations, or directions, even if we do not have hearing loss. Finally, research suggests that hearing loss may increase our risk for dementia. One study even suggested that if we eliminated all hearing loss, we could reduce worldwide dementia rates up to 9%.

There is good news! Experts suggest there are things we can do to improve our hearing. Aerobic exercise can make a difference: the increased blood flow helps supply oxygen to critical areas associated with good hearing. If you have significant hearing loss, a hearing aid can help. And, for all of us, building better attentional skills can really make a difference.

Focused listening is an excellent way to improve our listening skills. It simply asks that we consciously and deliberately focus our attention when we are learning something, like a name. We can also help ourselves by minimizing distractions (our phones, for example!) or even closing our eyes when we are listening and can do so safely.



## NOW DO IT!

15 MINUTES

- Lead your class in the workout to personalize their learning of the science.
- Practice focused listening with the whole class. Play recorded sounds to your class for a few seconds, one at a time. Have the class discuss together what the sound was that they heard.
- Divide your class into pairs.
- Practice focused listening in pairs. Play a short story podcast or read a short story to the whole class. Have students discuss in pairs what they heard, then write down 3 facts from the short story. Have each pair share the facts they recalled with the whole class.
- Do as many rounds of the focused listening workouts in pairs as time allows.
- For virtual delivery, modify workout to do “All Together.” Adjust scripting accordingly.

**Now let’s try focused listening together. This is a great workout to support your hearing skills and something you can continue to do daily on your own.**

**Our first workout is something we will do all together. I’m going to play some sounds, one at a time. Practice actively focusing and listening as I play each one. After a few seconds, I’ll stop the recording. Then we will talk together and guess what the sound was. Ready?**

### Sound Prompts Links

Use the resources below to find sound prompts for the first workout. Play them for a few seconds each on a computer or other device, such as your phone. Look for nature sounds, animal sounds, musical instruments, transportation sounds, or social sounds (children playing, laughter, conversations).



**Mynoise.net** This is a great resource for sounds of all types.

**Freesoundeffects.com** Another terrific source for short sound recordings.

**Noises.online** This website offers a simple interface for sound selection but has a more limited selection of auditory prompts.

**Next, we are going to work in pairs. Let's find a partner. I'm going to (play/read) a short story. Again, we will all practice focused listening as we hear the short story. Here we go.** Play or read short story to your class.

**Now I want you to talk with your partner about what you learned in the story. Agree on three facts from the story together and write those down on this worksheet.** Distribute the *Did You Hear That Story Facts Worksheet*. **Work quickly as we only have a few minutes.**

**OK, let's see how well our focused listening practice worked! Every pair will share their three facts. Who wants to start?**

**Great job, congratulate each other on some excellent focused listening!**

### SHORT STORY PROMPT LINKS

**This American Life** provides a variety of short stories to choose from in their radio show archives. To play an episode, select a podcast you are interested in.

**Storycorps** offers many wonderful short stories or conversations you can use for this activity.

**Allan Ganz and Rosalyn Ganz** Allan tells the story of his family's ice cream truck business.

**Percy White** Percy tells the story of his parents, sharecroppers who migrated north for better opportunities for themselves and their children.

### DID YOU HEAR THAT? STORY

Optional: Read this story to your class if you choose not to play a recorded story for this workout.

**As the wind picked up, Norman began to worry that in fact they might not make it out in time. He could see, even by the moonlight, the haze was thickening. By morning, it might be too late.**

**He paused, realizing that the worst thing he could do was create a panic. He began to calculate in his mind how many they were. He recalled at least 10 kids. There was one mom who had 3 with her, one couldn't have been older than two. And at least one, that teenager with the "NY Yankees" shirt on, seemed to be on his own. There were a few folks he thought might help if he could convince them they needed to move. That woman with the short brown hair, she seemed pretty level-headed. And those guys coming back together from that business meeting. They sure were loud when they boarded, but by now they must have sobered up. There were a few folks who seemed like they might**



have trouble walking over the brush, but perhaps they could set up a buddy system. That might work.

He wondered whether the crew that had left for help had even made it. He knew they'd gone in that general direction, but even if they reached a town or say a remote convenience store chances were most everyone would have evacuated by now. Perhaps the company had alerted the authorities that they hadn't arrived on time at the next station. But with everything going on, who knew if anyone had even noticed.

Just then Norman heard a sound just to his left. Like a twig snapping, or something falling. Did something follow him? He was just a few yards from where the train had stopped, but the forest was pretty dark. "Is someone out there?" he heard a kid's voice call. "You shouldn't really be out here alone, there might be snakes or something." "Over here," Norman replied, "just getting some air."

Norman could make out a tall, thin figure scrambling towards him in the darkness. It was that teen, what was his name? He couldn't quite recall. He came into the small clearing next to Norman and followed his gaze. "Is that smoke? From the fire? That seems like it's getting sorta close, don't you think?"

Norman turned to the kid, keeping his voice level. "It does, but I have a plan to get us out of here. Want to help?"



## TBH TAKEAWAY

10 MINUTES

- Share this brief wrap-up to end the workout.
- Distribute or email handouts to each student.
- Ask students to share one thing they will "take away" from today's class.

Today we learned why good hearing health is critical to staying sharp, good memory and our cognitive well-being. While it can be harder to hear as we age, there are things we can do to keep our hearing healthy and be more effective listeners. Focused listening is a great way we can do that, and something we can keep practicing on our own each day.

Here are some handouts to take home and continue the work we did together.

Can you name one thing you will do each day to practice focused listening?



## TBH TAKE A BREATH

5 MINUTES

- Lead this signature relaxation and affirmation exercise to close class.
- See the [TBH Take a Breath playlist](#) for suggested music to set the pace of your workout.
- See the course introduction for a fully scripted version of this workout.
- Mute distance learners to avoid noisy distractions.

**Let's wrap up with "TBH Take a Breath." Being mindful of our breath and sharing some positive thoughts is a wonderful way to acknowledge what we've learned together before we go back to our day. Research also shows that these kinds of exercises help us focus better and even learn more effectively.**

- ▶ *Have students get comfortable, resting both feet flat on the floor, hands resting in their laps.*
- ▶ *Have students close their eyes and keep them gently closed.*
- ▶ *Ask students to focus their attention on their breathing, noticing the rate and rhythm of their breath. Allow them to focus on their natural breathing for a few moments.*
- ▶ *Instruct students to begin rhythmic breathing. Ask them to inhale slowly and deeply through their nostrils, breathing gently into their chest and belly. Then ask them to exhale slowly through their lips, slowing the rate and rhythm of their breath.*
- ▶ *Have students continue rhythmic breathing, instructing them to continue to focus on gently and slowly inhaling and exhaling, allowing their attention to simply "ride" the wave of their breath. Allow them to focus on rhythmic breathing for several moments.*
- ▶ *Offer the following positive affirmation statements below in a calm, slow voice. Invite students to simply listen, repeat the phrase silently to themselves, or to think about what each statement means to them.*

**My mind is relaxed.**

**I am grateful for my hearing.**

**I am grateful for the sounds around me.**

**I am grateful for my family and friends.**

**I am grateful for this time and for my breath.**

- ▶ *Pause for several moments.*
- ▶ *End the exercise by inviting your students to bring their awareness back to the room, gently opening their eyes and becoming more aware of the room and of each other.*
- ▶ *Invite them to end practice with gratitude for taking a moment for themselves, for the chance to learn together and to connect with each other.*



### COMING UP NEXT!

2 MINUTES

- Thank students for attending the class.
- Invite students to join you for the next TBH class.

**I am so glad we had this time to learn together today. I enjoyed practicing my listening skills with all of you.**

**I look forward to seeing you for our next TBH Brain Workout class. Be sure to bring a friend!**



### CLASS RESOURCES

#### NOW DO IT! WORKSHEETS

Provide your students with the following worksheets for the in-class exercise.

***TBH Did You Hear That? Story Worksheet.*** Read this story to your class if you opt not to use a recorded story.

***TBH Did You Hear That? Story Facts Worksheet.*** Distribute to each pair for use in the second focused listening workout.

#### TBH TAKEAWAY HANDOUTS

Distribute these optional handouts to extend the learning experience.

***Better Hearing Takes Practice*** (Wired.com). An article summarizing research findings about how auditory practice can improve one's hearing over time.

***10 Steps to Better Hearing Health*** (A Total Brain Health White Paper). Ten simple steps everyone can take to boost their hearing health.