

Fidget & “Fiddle” Tools

Benefits

Fiddles may look like toys to the untrained eye, but they can be serious learning tools. Your group will likely experience these benefits if they pick up a toy or two during your session. Please know, our kinesthetic learning tools are specially selected for quiet and mindless use.

- **Promote a relaxed, playful mindset**—set a creative-friendly tone in your class.
- **Improve focus** – kinesthetic learners will focus better and absorb your material more quickly if they have something to do with their hands.
- **Relieve stress** – playing with toys and hand-held manipulatives is proven to relieve stress.
- **Engage the whole brain** – discussions are left-brained; toys tap into the creative right brain. Kinesthetic learners will focus better and absorb your material more quickly if they have something to do with their hands.

Application → for best results, we suggest . . .

1. **DISTRIBUTION:** Leave a pile of fiddles in a basket in the front of the room or on a table.
2. **VARIETY:** Offer a variety of tools that will appeal to a range of tactile preferences.
3. **TALK ABOUT THEM:**
 - You can either let these “toys” speak for themselves or let people know that they are “tools” and help some people focus better.
 - Invite learners to take one. If it makes you feel more comfortable, you can explain some of the benefits of having “toys” in class—but we recommend holding off on discussion or explanation until learners have had some time with them.
 - Explain “Floating Attention” — we are still guided by our “Reptilian Brain” and wired to have part of our attention float. It was a matter of life and death! Now, when part of our mind wanders, we are better served by fidgeting and doodling, than daydreaming!
4. **STAND AND STRETCH:** Don't rely only on fidget toys, invite your group to stand, stretch, or walk around if they need to get the blood moving back to their brain.
5. **FOOD AND WATER:** These essentials are also critical to maintaining focus over long periods of time.

Debrief

Engage your group in a discussion about the effect of having the Fiddles on the tables. Ask:

- Who used a Fiddle? Did some tend to use them more or less than others?
- Were they helpful or distracting? Why? Did fiddling enhance or interfere with listening?
- What were your favorites? Why?
- How else do people fiddle and fidget? (i.e. doodling, twirling pencils, rings, hair, etc.)

Don't forget to ask that the Fiddles be returned to you . . . or offer them as a parting gift.