

CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

Pray with your Feet: Morning Fitness *Start Your Morning*

AUTHOR(S):	Mara Berde
SUMMARY:	Wake up your body in this active, fitness-based <i>tefillah</i> (prayer) activity. We will connect prayers from the morning service to our bodies and our breath. Come prepared to move your body; we will be running, skipping, jumping, stretching, and more. (Please wear athletic shoes and comfortable clothes!) - <i>Submitted by Mara Berde</i>
TOPIC(S):	Fitness/athletics; <i>tefillah</i> (prayer)
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will: have more energy, feel more calm after having focused on breath and breathing; feel good about the day ahead; gain ideas for athletics-based morning rituals and alternative <i>tefillah</i> (prayer)
AUDIENCE:	Applicable to any age; most activities presented can be for a very small group (3 people) up to about 30 people
TIMING:	45-60 minutes
APPENDICES:	<i>Modeh Ani</i> text; 3 blessings from <i>Birkot Hashachar</i> /morning blessings (below)
MATERIALS NEEDED:	None
SET-UP DETAILS:	Large, open space for running and stretching. Be sure to hang <i>Modeh Ani</i> and text of blessings on wall or fence nearby. Preferred space is outdoor court (basketball, tennis, hockey, etc.) with enough space for running. If rain or bad weather, can use gym or large, empty room.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

0:00 – 0:05	Welcome / Intro
0:05 – 0:10	Kavanah
0:10 – 0:20	Run with <i>Modeh Ani</i>
0:20 – 0:40	Exercises with <i>Birkot Hashachar</i>
0:40 – 0:45	Conclusion

0:00 – 0:05

Welcome / Intro

- Thinking about your participation in athletics, exercise, or sports, think about what you have gained from these experiences.
- Thinking about the morning service, or prayer in general in Judaism, what can we gain from engaging in prayer?
- Connect morning prayer to ritual (morning coffee, meditation, gym, etc.)
- Can the fitness and morning ritual elements be woven together? Perhaps they will become even more impactful.
- Challenge group to take time at camp for yourself. Focus on self, body, breathing.

0:05 – 0:10

PART 1: *Kavanah*

Ask the group if they have heard of the concept of *kavanah*. (Many will say yes.) More than an “intention”, *kavanah* also provides us with a “direction.” [Kavanah comes from the Hebrew כיוון “*kivun*” meaning direction.]

Setting an intention or a direction at the start of the day or start of an activity is a great way to deepen the experience. [E.g. Our coaches have a theme or an idea for each day sometimes it’s a skill like “passing” but can also be connected to the bigger picture of WHY do we pass the ball, which can lead to “teamwork.” A *kavanah* can be used to frame an entire activity; it can be very basic, surface level or get deep. It’s up to you.]

In pairs, share your name, camp, favorite sport or activity, and a personal *kavanah* for the day.

Back in large group, have a few people share their *kavanah*. Mention that the *kavanah* does not have to come from the staff. (Some of the most thoughtful and meaningful *kavanah* discussions that I’ve had have been with young children.)

Tell group to remember their *kavanah*. We’ll come back to them again at the end.

0:10 – 0:20

Part 2: Run with *Modeh Ani* מודה אני

Modeh Ani is the first prayer that we say in the morning after we wake up. It’s about gratitude. About taking the time to breathe, appreciating the little things, expressing thankfulness.

Take a minute to focus on your breath. Count while you’re breathing in, count while you’re breathing out. Close your eyes if you want, or look around you and find other things to be grateful for.

Breathe together. Inhale for 4 seconds. Exhale for 4 seconds.

Lead group on *Modeh Ani* Run. Very slow run for about 5 minutes, everyone runs together, silently so that people can focus on their breath and the nature and beauty around them.

When group returns from run, ask people what they noticed. What did they experience? Did they focus on their breathing?

0:20 – 0:40

Part 3: Exercises with Birkot Hashachar ברכות השחר

Now that we've focused on breathing and spiritual awakening, it's time to wake up our bodies. *Birkot Hashachar* are a series of blessings that are said during the morning (*Shacharit*) service. We're going to focus on 3 that have particular relevance to our bodies.

1. <i>Pokeach Ivrim</i>	פוקח עוברים	opening eyes
2. <i>Zokef kefufim</i>	זוקף כפופים	lifts up the fallen (stretching)
3. <i>Hanotein layaef koach</i>	הנותן ליעף כח	gives strength to the weary

These 3 prayers are from a long list of blessings that are preparing us for the day. Just like we warm up our bodies before a game, we also warm up our bodies for the day. Here we're going to combine them and do an action while also having a particular mental focus.

- Active warm up: while walking forward, straight leg kick-ups (10); pull knees to chest (10) – **focus on stretching** (*zokef kefufim*)
- Plyometrics: high knees, butt kickers, skip for height, skip for distance, side shuffle (both directions) – **focus on keeping eyes open, stretching, balance** (*pokeach ivrim, zokef kefufim*)
- HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training): Sample of exercises that push you physically and mentally – **focus on being strong** (*hanotein layaef koach*)

0:40 – 0:45

Part 4: Sportsmanship Stretch & Bringing it Back to Camp

In stretching circle, give people the opportunity to give shout outs to others for their effort. Who was exemplifying our values or our intention for the day? Start by giving shout outs to a few people and then take a few volunteers.

Ask if anyone remembers their *kavanah* that they set at the beginning. Have people share if they were able to connect to it, did they think about it at all? If not, what would have made it better, what would have made it stick?

Reminder to breathe and think back to *Modeh Ani*. How can breathing help you at camp or in life?

Challenge group to take some pieces of this back to camp. What can be for you, what can be for your campers? Working at camp is non-stop job; encourage Fellows to time at camp for yourself. Focus on self, body, breathing.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

This session is meant to provide Fellows with a few ideas for morning activities that incorporate waking up the body & mind. Variations on these activities can be done with their cabin, unit, or the entire camp. They can also be useful as a personal practice (rather than replicating it for campers.)

Modeh Ani Text

מֹדֵה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ,	Modeh ani l'fânechá,
מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיָּם,	Melech chai v'kayám,
שֶׁהַחַזְרַת בִּי נִשְׁמַתִּי בְּחַמְלָה	she'heh'chezartá bi nishmâti b'chemlá
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ.	Rabá emuná'techá.

I gratefully thank You, living and everlasting Ruler,
For restoring my soul to me, with compassion.
Abundant is your faithfulness.

Selected blessings from Birkot Hashachar

<i>Pokeach Ivrim</i>	פּוֹקֵחַ עוֹבְרִים	opening eyes
<i>Zokef kefufim</i>	זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים	lifts up the fallen (stretching)
<i>Hanotein layaef koach</i>	הַנּוֹתֵן לַיָּעֵף כֹּחַ	gives strength to the weary