

Pray with your Feet *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 <i>Shacharit</i> morning service to our bodies and our breath. Come prepared to move your body; we will be running, skipping, jumping, stretching, and more. - <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)
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Large open space for running & stretching; Text of <i>Modeh Ani</i> and blessings written on large papers
SET-UP DETAILS:	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 – 0:25	Kavanah Jog
0:25 – 0:45	Exercises with <i>Birkot Hashahar</i>
0:45 – 0:55	Silent Stretch
0:55 – 1:00	Conclusion: bringing it back to camp

0:00 – 0:05

Welcome / Intro

Share and lead a discussion on the following:

- Some people choose to start their day with fitness or something active. Why do they do this? What do they bring, physically, mentally, or spiritually?
- How is this similar or different from starting your day with *Shaharit* (the morning service)?
- What if we weave together the morning blessings and a morning fitness routine?

0:05 – 0:25

Part 1: Kavanah Jog

Share: *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, and expressing thankfulness. (Show the text of *Modeh Ani* that's written on a poster-board, and sing together.)

After *Modeh Ani*, have the group take a minute to focus on their breath. Count while you're breathing in, count while you're breathing out. Close your eyes if you want, or look at the nature around you.

Breathe together: Inhale for the count of 4; exhale for the count of 4.

Explain to the group about the importance of breathing while you exercise. Introduce the concept of a "Kavanah Jog" – a silent, solo run where you focus on your breath. In order to get the group to spread out and not clump together while running, enlist the help of a liaison or faculty member to send one person at a time, 5 seconds apart, so that everyone is running in a very long line. By running silently, they will also be able to focus more on their breath and the beauty and nature around them. During the run, remind them to focus on breathing, counting steps and trying to breathe in for 4 steps, out for 4 steps.

When group returns from running, gather the group in a circle and ask people what they noticed. How did that experience feel for them? Were they able to focus on their breathing?

0:25 – 0:45

Part 2: 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.

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

These 3 prayers are from Birkot Hashachar, a long list of blessings that prepare us for the day. Here we will use them to prepare our bodies for the day ahead. We'll combine a few exercises with each blessing and focus on the theme of that blessing during each of the movements.

Stretching – *Zokef Kefufim*

- High knees while jogging
- Butt kickers while jogging
- While walking forward: straight leg kick-ups; pull knees to chest;
- While standing: rotate arms around body

Increasing balance – *Pokeach Ivrim*

- Single leg deadlift and reach
- Warrior pose
- 3-way leg swings

Strengthening – *Hanotein layaef koach*

- Squats
- Sumo squats
- Lunges
- Calf raises

0:45 – 0:55

Part 4: Silent Stretch

Come back together in a circle to stretch and focus again on breathing. Take a few deep breaths together.

Remind participants to breathe and think about how breathing can help them during camp. What times/moments during the summer could it help to focus on your breath? (Give examples such as before making announcements, before talking to a staff member, before helping a camper with something.)

Mention this year's Cornerstone theme: *Hitoreri* – awaken, wake up. Does your body or soul feel more awake?

- Stretch lower body muscles – calves, hamstring, quads, glutes
- Stretch upper body muscles – shoulders, deltoids, wrists, neck

0:55 – 1:00

Part 5: Bringing it Back to Camp

Allow a couple minutes for participants to think about ways this can be used at camp. What would need to be changed or modified? Would it work with campers? Staff? Large group? Small group? What can be for you? What can be for your campers? Working at camp is non-stop job; encourage Fellows to take time at camp for themselves and focus on 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

מוֹדֵה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ,	Modeh ani l'fânechâ,
מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם,	Melech chai v'kayâm,
שֶׁהַחַזְרַת בִּי נִשְׁמַתִּי בְּחַמְלָה	she'heh'chezartâ bi nishmâtî b'chemlâ
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ.	Rabâ emunâ'techâ.

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

Selected blessings from Birkot Hashachar

<i>Pokeach Ivrim</i>	פּוֹקֵחַ עֹבְרִים	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