



## Visual Pushups

### *DEVELOP YOUR VISUAL MUSCLES WITH THESE VISUAL EXERCISES*

Everyday, people everywhere engage in some form of physical exercise. We know that physical activities develop certain muscles in our bodies and lead to a more healthy life. Let's think for a moment of the mind as two muscles. One muscle is used when we do things involving words like reading a book, writing a letter, or listening to someone talk. The other muscle is used for "visual" things like recognizing a face of someone we've seen before, reading a map, or remembering a place we've been. This other muscle also controls our daydreaming, flights of fantasy, and our imagination.

Like athletes, artists develop their "visual muscles" by continuous practice and use. They practice by looking at things closely, drawing them, and recording them in their minds' eye.

**Materials You Need:** A pencil and drawing paper or sketchbook.

**What To Do:** Here are some "push-ups" you can do in your classroom or home to exercise your "visual muscle." Each one can be done again and again for practice.

- Draw a picture of something (like a bicycle or shoe) showing it from three different views on the same page.
- Take an object apart and then draw it. (Get permission first!)
- Fill a page with drawings of bugs, sea shells, or something you collect.
- Examine an object for one minute. Put the object away. Then draw a picture of what you remember about it. When you finish drawing, look at the object again and see how much you remembered of it.
- Use a magnifying glass to draw enlarged views of water drops, hair, plant leaves, and other small items.
- Go through a magazine and cut out a photograph of something you enjoy or find interesting to look at. Draw a picture of this image—only turn it upside down. (This will make you look closely at what you're drawing.)
- Show someone how to do something (like making a paper airplane) in a sequence of drawn pictures (with as few words as possible.)
- Draw yourself by looking in a mirror.
- Draw a family member or friend from memory.
- Draw your pet or go to a local zoo and draw the animals there.
- Draw a map showing your route from home to school. Include local landmarks. (For more practice, draw a map of your neighborhood, backyard, or bedroom.)
- Sit under a tree and draw it from your point of view. Draw other things around your backyard from unusual points-of-view.
- Take your shoe off and examine it closely. Feel its contours, look inside it, turn it upside down. Once you are familiar with it, draw a picture of it. Try this with other objects around the house.

**Want To Do More?** Make up your own "visual push-ups" to do. Date each of your exercises and keep them all in a portfolio or sketchbook so you can check your progress and growth over time.