



Deep Breathing and Mindful Movements

Activity / K-4 / 5-15 minutes

Purpose

To teach and practice self-regulation skills.

Materials

Script, possibly create anchor charts with pictures (balloon, birthday cake, lemon, kindness)

Instructions

Utilize one or more of the following exercises in class wide, small group or individual settings. Suggested times include morning meeting, before/after transitions, after lunch/recess or moments of class wide agitation.

Balloon Breath → Ask students to pretend that inside their stomach is a special balloon. Say, “The only way we can fill this balloon is with breath through our noses! The only way we can let the air out is slowly through our mouths!” Ask students to place their hands on their belly so they can feel the balloon when it is blowing up. Guide students to breathe in through their nose to fill their belly/balloon with air and then let go of all the air very slowly through their mouths. Repeat 3-5 times. *Can be modified by having students lie down and place a small stuffed animal/toy on their belly and watch it rise and fall as they breathe in and out.

Birthday Cake Breath → Ask students to hold out their hands in front of them. Guide them in imagining they are holding their own birthday cake (provide time for them to imagine their favorite cake/icing flavors). Say, “In a moment we are going to take a really big breath in through our nose to “smell” how yummy our birthday cake is. Then we are going to hold our breath for a moment to “make a wish,” and then as slowly as possible we are going to blow out all the candles.” Then lead students through the process and repeat 3-5 times.

The Lemon → This activity can be done sitting or standing. Say, “reach up with both hands as high as you can to pick two lemons from a tree above you. Pretend you have a big lemon in each hand and you want to squeeze all the juice out. Now squeeze really hard. Get all the juice out. Feel the tightness in your hands and arms as you squeeze. Now drop the lemons from your hands, gently shake off the juice and relax. Reach up and grab one more lemon in each hand. Try to squeeze this one harder and get even more juice out than the first. Keep squeezing. Now drop the lemons and relax. Notice how your arms and hands feel now that they are relaxed.”

Sharing Kindness Practice (Modified Sun Salutation) → Lead your students through the following gestures, flowing from one movement into the next, either silently, or with instructions:

- “Reach your arms up to the sky and grab all that [positive energy/kindness/love/etc] and bring it into your heart” (extend arms upward, with palms facing up, bring hands together to rest on your heart)
- “Share that [positive energy/kindness/love/etc] with all your friends” (arms out and wide on either side of the body, palms facing outward, as if preparing for a hug)
- “Bring that [positive energy/kindness/love/etc] back into your hearts” (place hands back on your heart)
- “And back down into the ground” (arms drop slowly to your side, palms facing downward)

References

Whalen, K., Powell, T., & Samra, P. (2009). *Elementary Journey of Hope: Coping with and Normalizing Emotions*. Westport, CT: Save the Children
Langley, A., & Jaycox, L. Bounce Back. National Childhood Traumatic Stress Network. Retrieved from bouncebackprogram.org.



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Additional Resources

Online and App Based Resources

Go Noodle → videos for energizing and calming <https://app.gonoodle.com/>

Relaxation Activities → <http://www.healthiersf.org/resources/pubs/stressRed/StressReductionActivities.pdf>

Smiling Mind → app (from Australia) that includes mindfulness lessons, activities and guided meditations

Breathe2Relax → leads you in belly breathing

Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame → Sesame Street app to teach regulation and problem solving skills

Link to short video to share with students about breathing to relax → <https://mysmartgirls.com/short-film-just-breathe-helps-kids-deal-with-emotions-1b4f91dac5ad#.ma7ix76iy>

Books & Curricula (*NOT freely available, but links to resources and access information below*)

StarBright: Meditations for Children by Maureen Garth **copy available for use*

Yoga Pretzels – card deck with yoga and breath activities for use in multiple ways **copy available for use*

Ready Set R.E.L.A.X. by Jeffrey S. Allen and Roger J. Klein **copy available for use*

Project Peaceful Warriors → local organization offering YOGA Ed. trainings for educators
<http://projectpeacefulwarriors.strikingly.com/>

MeMoves → music and movement to promote regulation, originally developed for students with ASD, sample videos available <https://thinkingmoves.com/> **copy available for use*

Niroga Institute → offer online training in Dynamic Mindfulness Curriculum, links to free sample lessons
<http://www.niroga.org/education/curriculum/samples.php>

MindUp → <https://mindup.org/mindup-mindful-classroom-framework-schools/> **copy available for use*

Conscious Discipline → whole school social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation program. Free resources available here <http://consciousdiscipline.com/resources/>