



Deep Breathing Script

Imagine you just finished dinner, and you go into the living room to watch your favorite show on TV. Think about how your body feels when you are relaxing on the couch and watching your show.

What is happening in your body? Who can give me some words to describe how you would feel?

I know I would feel calm, peaceful, and comfortable in my body. This is because during this time our body is in what is known as the “rest and digest” mode. Our muscles are relaxed, our breathing is slow, and our heart rate is normal.

Now imagine that suddenly, a dinosaur broke into your living room and started chasing you! How would your body feel now? Who can give me some examples of changes that might occur in your body?

I think that my heart would start pounding really hard, my hands would start sweating, my eyes would get wide, and I would feel scared and anxious. That is because when we experience a stressful event, our bodies automatically go into what is called the “fight, flight, or freeze” mode. Naturally, your body wants to protect itself, run away, or maybe even freeze with fear. During this time your heart rate increases, your breathing becomes shallower, and your stomach stops digestion.

Who knows what “shallow” breathing means?

Shallow breathing is also sometimes called “chest breathing.” This is when you are only breathing in a little bit of air into your chest area, instead of drawing in a deep breath that goes down closer to your stomach area. Shallow breaths are usually short and fast, like this: (demonstrate). Too much shallow breathing is actually not good for your body.

This is why I am going to teach you a couple different ways to use “deep breathing” exercises if you are ever in the “fight, flight, or freeze” mode and need to get back to your “rest and digest” mode.

Deep breathing is also sometimes called “belly breathing.” These kinds of breaths help us get more oxygen into our bloodstream, which can actually help our bodies calm down and lower our stress. Can anyone demonstrate what they think a deep breath might look like?

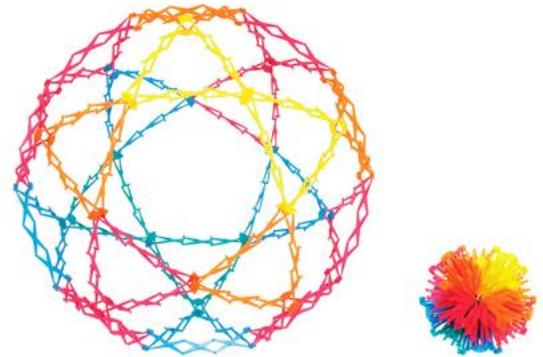
Good! When you are deep breathing, if you put your hand on your stomach, you should be able to feel your hand moving away from your body when you breath in, and moving towards your body when you breath out. Each week when I come into your classroom, I am going to show you all a new way to practice deep breathing. This week we are going to start out with _____ (See following pages).



Here are some examples of deep breathing techniques:

Hoberman Sphere

A Hoberman Sphere is a toy that is patented by Chuck Hoberman that is capable of expanding into a sphere and collapsing back down into a fraction of its normal size by its scissor-like joints. Children can use this toy to practice deep breathing by breathing in when they slowly expand the sphere, and breathing out when they push the sphere back in. Explain that this is similar to what should be happening with their belly.



Bubble Breaths

Blowing bubbles is a fun, playful way to practice slow, gentle breathing. Children have to be careful and intentional about their breaths to properly form the bubbles. If they breath too hard or fast (shallow breathing) their bubble will likely pop before leaving the wand.



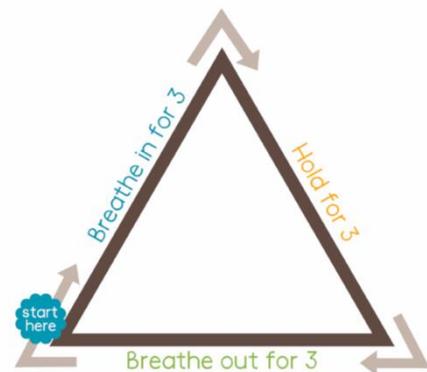
Youtube Video

There are many different deep breathing exercises and mindfulness training videos that provide a visual for when to breathe in and out. This may be helpful to children who are more visual learners or have trouble understanding how long/slow to breath during each stage. A child-friendly example of this is the “Restful Breathing Training, Version B” from Mark Connelly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLbK0o9Bk7Q>



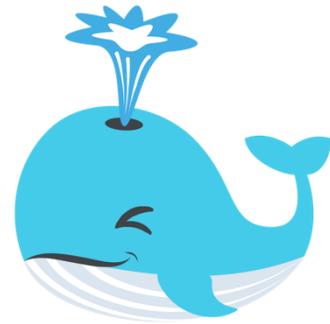
Triangle Breathing

This exercise uses the triangle visual to the right to facilitate deep breathing. The child begins at the “start here” location, and breaths in for three seconds, tracing the side of the triangle as they go. They then hold their breath for three seconds as they trace the second side of the triangle. Last, they breathe out for three more seconds, tracing the final side of the triangle.



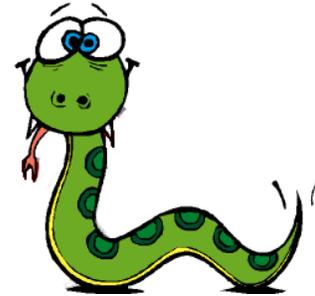
Whale Breaths

Have the children imagine that their mouth is the blowhole of a whale. Tell them to take a deep breath in through their nose and hold it for 5 seconds. Then, have them tilt their head upward and blow the air out of their “blowhole” towards the ceiling.



Snake Breaths

Have the children imagine that they are a snake. Tell them to breathe in through their nose, hold it for 5 seconds, and then breathe back out slowly. When they breathe out, have them make a hissing sound like a snake for as long as they can.



Take 5 Breathing Exercise

Have the children place one hand in front of them, with their fingers spread apart. Using the index finger on their other hand, explain to them how to trace the outside of their hand. Starting at the base of your thumb, breathe in and move your finger up one side of the thumb. When moving down the other side of your thumb, breathe out. Continue this pattern with your remaining fingers, moving slowly and taking deep breaths with each finger.



Volcano Breathing

This breathing technique can be paired with an analogy of releasing all the negative feelings/energies out the top of a mountain. Children bring the palms of their hands together in front of their chest, facing upward. As they breathe in, instruct them to raise their hands together above their head. When they breathe out, they can open up their hands like a volcano is exploding, releasing all negative feelings out the top, and slowly bringing their arms back down to begin another breath.



Rainbow Breathing

Begin this breathing exercise with straight arms on one side of your body. As you breathe in, bring your arms up and towards the center. When you breathe out, bring your arms back down the other side. You will be making a “rainbow” in the air with your arms.



Smell the Roses and Blow out the Candles

This exercise provides simple, imaginative components to better conceptualize the process of deep breathing. Instruct the children to imagine they are smelling beautiful flowers when they breathe in. When they breathe out, tell them to breathe enough air out like they would to blow out all the candles on their birthday cake.



Back-to-Back Breathing

This breathing exercise requires the children to find a partner and sit on the floor back-to-back. They should sit up tall so that their backs are touching, and they can close their eyes if they want to. One student will start by taking a deep breath in, and then breathing out slowly. They will continue this pattern of deep breathing so that their partner can feel it on their back each time they take a breath. The partner will then try to sync up their own breathing pattern so that the two students can feel that they are breathing in sync with each other.



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