

BREATHING EXERCISES

An important part of emotional regulation involves bringing our bodies to a calm or relaxed state. When calm, we manage our emotions more effectively and are better able to focus on cognitive tasks, such as learning. When calm, we are more present in social situations and are more able to engage in social activities in appropriate ways. There are many ways that you can help children and young people to calm their bodies. One of the easiest ways is to teach them how to control their breathing. Four simple, yet effective methods are explained below. The first two methods are suitable for younger children, while the last two may be more appropriate for older children or young people. In all of these exercises encourage them to inhale through their noses and exhale through their mouths.

Butterfly Breathing

Stand or sit comfortably with your arms by your sides. Pretend that you are a butterfly and that your arms are beautiful wings. You are going to raise and lower your arms slowly, imitating how a butterfly opens and closes its wings. Slowly raise your arms while inhaling to the count of 1, 2, 3. Slowly lower your arms back down by your sides while exhaling to the count of 3, 2, 1.



See the You Tube Video, Butterfly Breathing Conscious Discipline
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VXknVjy1T0>



Blow Out the Candles

Imagine that a birthday cake with candles is placed in front of your face. You are getting ready to blow out the candles. Inhale deeply and hold for the count of 1, 2, 3, 4. Exhale to blow out the candles to the count of 1, 2, 3, 4. Repeat.

5 Finger Breathing

Stretch out the fingers of your dominant hand like a star fish in front of you. Place the index finger from your other hand at your wrist at the base of the thumb. Inhale to the count of 3 as you trace your finger up along the outer side of the thumb. Hold to the count of 2 while pausing at the tip of your thumb. Exhale to the count of 3 as you trace down the inner side of the thumb. Hold to the count of 2 while pausing at the inner base of the thumb. Continue to inhale, hold and exhale as you trace up and down the other fingers in a similar way.

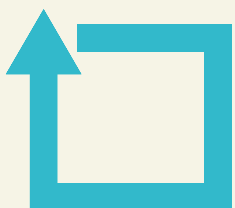


See the You tube Video, Five Finger breathing a simple guided breathing exercise for kids. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQVZgpyVQ78>

Square Breathing

Visualise a square in front of you. Let your breathing follow the shape of the square. Breathe in 1, 2, 3, 4 as you travel up the left-hand side of the square. Hold for 4 as you travel across the top of the square. Exhale for 4 as you travel down the right-hand side of the square. Hold again for 4 as you go across the bottom of the square.

See the You tube Video, Kids meditation Square Breathing (Focus and Calm)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFdZXwE6fRE>



Safety

Calm

Connectedness

Efficacy

Hope



An Roinn Oideachais
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Department of
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