

## Calm me breathing activities

### General information - Why deep breathing matters.

When you are calm, your body is in what is known as “rest and digest” mode. Your breathing is normal, your muscles are relaxed, and your heart rate is normal. It's how you would be when you're watching a show and relaxing.

But then suddenly, a dinosaur is chasing you!!

When you experience a stressful event (like an unexpected dinosaur in your living room), your body automatically goes into what is known as “flight, fight or freeze” mode. Your heart rate increases, your stomach stops digestion, and your breathing becomes more shallow.

The goal of calming exercises is to get yourself from “flight, fight or freeze” mode back to “rest and digest” mode. Deep breathing helps get more oxygen into your bloodstream, opening up your capillaries. It has a physical effect on your body to help you calm down and lower stress.

**The breathing we want kids to do is deep belly breaths, not shallow chest breaths. When they breathe in, their belly should expand, and when they breathe out, their belly should contract.**

### Magic Dust

Sit comfortably and take in a deep breath. As you breathe in, feel as if you are breathing in magic fairy dust. Now, gently blow out the fairy dust into the air and imagine the room is being filled with fairy dust.

### Deep Breaths

Close your eyes and sit comfortably with your back straight. As you sit there, spend some time observing your breathing. Feel the in-breath and watch what happens when you breathe back out. As you sit there, try to make the breaths longer. Take in a longer in-breath and then breathe out slowly and gently. As you breathe out, feel as if all your worries and problems are blowing away, leaving you feel relaxed and calm. Repeat this a couple more times.

### Squeeze and Relax

Lie down or sit back in your chair and take in a deep breath, and as you breathe in, squeeze all the muscles in your body. Now breathe out and relax all the muscles in your body. Repeat this exercise.

### Bubbles

Imagine you are blowing bubbles of peace or happiness or love into the room. Take in a breath and imagine you have a pot of bubble liquid. Slowly and gently blow bubbles into the room. As you blow out the bubbles, imagine they are filled with peace and the whole room is filling up with peace.

### Butterfly breaths

Imagine there is a butterfly on end of your nose. You feel the butterfly as your breathe in and out. Now it is on your chest as you breath in and out and now on your stomach. Take in a deep breath into your stomach and watch the butterfly rise and fall with your stomach.

### Green Breaths

Lie down on the floor or bed and put your hand on your tummy. Breathe in and out gently and feel your tummy rising and falling. Now, as you breathe in, imagine you are breathing green light. It feels very calming and peaceful. Now breathe the green light out into the room. Fill the whole room with soft green light. Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out.

### Tummy Breathing

Sit or lie down and put your hand on your tummy. Feel your tummy rising and falling as you breathe deeply. Continue breathing and feeling calm and relaxed and focussed.

### Smiling Heart

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose, slowly, and out through your mouth. Put your hand on your chest and spend a few moments feeling calm and relaxed. Now, Imagine that you have a smile in your heart. Watch how you start to have loving feelings. Can you send that smile up to your face? Let your mouth smile gently. Breathe in and out and rest there for a few moments. Now open your eyes and see how different you feel.

### Colour Breathing

Take in a breath and, as you breathe in, imagine you are breathing in the colour pink for love. Feel this colour touching all the parts of your body inside. Send it around your whole body. Now, as you breathe out, see if you can imagine breathing the colour into the room. Fill the room with the colour pink.

### Mind the Gap

Ask pupils to breathe in and out slowly and ask them to observe the gap in between breaths. Let them observe the gap in between the out breath and the in breath and the in breath and the out breath.

## Traffic Control

Explain to pupils that our minds are like traffic - constantly moving and flowing. Every once in a while, it is good to let the traffic come to a standstill, turn on the red light and relax. While you are studying or doing your homework, try to stop every hour just for a few moments. Use a visual cue - a red flashing light or red card or a sound cue, such as a bell or music. Ask pupils to close their eyes, stay very still and take in 3 deep breaths. Count up to 10 or 20 really slowly and let them feel they are becoming more and more relaxed and calm. After a few moments, they can open their eyes again. If pupils are really relaxed and need to get on with work, they can give their ears a fast rub.

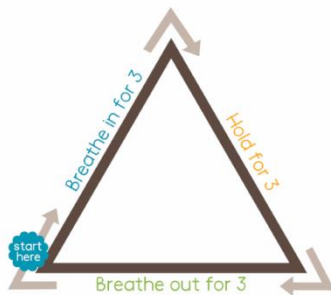
## Triangle breathing

Start at the bottom left of the triangle.

Breathe in for three counts as you trace the first side of the triangle.

Hold your breath for three counts as you trace the second side of the triangle.

Breathe out for three counts as you trace the final side of the triangle. You have just completed one deep breath.



## Square breathing

Start at the bottom right of the square

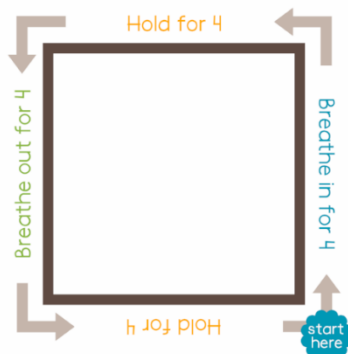
Breathe in for four counts as you trace the first side of the square

Hold your breath for four counts as you trace the second side of the square

Breathe out for four counts as you trace the third side of the square

Hold your breath for four counts as you trace the final side of the square

You just completed one deep breath!



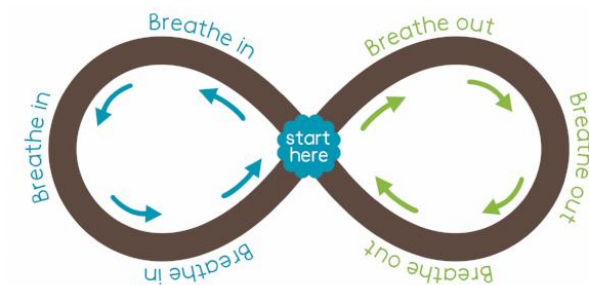
## Star breathing

Start at any "Breathe In" side on the star.  
Trace your finger over the "breathe in" side of the point  
Hold your breath when your finger gets to the tip of the point  
Breathe out as you trace your finger over the other side of the point.  
Keep going until you reach where you started.  
When you trace the whole star, you will have completed 5 deep breaths.



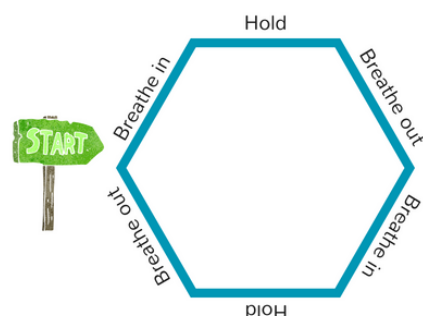
## Lazy 8 breathing

Start with the eight on its side and start in the middle  
Go up to the left and trace the left part of the 8 with your finger while you breathe in.  
When you get to the middle of the eight again, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8 with your finger.



## 6 sided breathing

Start at the left hand side of the hexagon.  
Trace your finger over the "breathe in" side as you take a deep breath in.  
Hold your breath as you trace the second side of the hexagon.  
Breathe out as you trace the third side of the hexagon.  
Then repeat for the bottom part of the hexagon.



### Flower/candles

Breathe in like a flower, breathe out like you are blowing out birthday candles.

### Sky

Breathe in blue sky, Breathe out gray skies.

### Blowing up a balloon

Your belly is like a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon bigger, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.

### Smell and cool

Smell the soup, cool the soup or smell the hot cocoa, cool the hot cocoa

### Darth Vader Breathing

Pretend you have a straw in your mouth, suck in through the straw and breathe in. Breathe out like Darth Vader.

### Ocean Breathing –

Breathe in and imagine the wave rolling in, breathe out and imagine the wave rolling out.

### Colour breathing

Breathe in and imagine a calm, happy, positive color. Breathe out and imagine a color that represents stress, anxiety, etc. leaving your body.

### Soft Belly

Say to yourself “soft” as you breathe in and “belly” as you breathe out.

### Whale breath

Sitting criss-cross applesauce, sit up tall and take a deep breathe in, Hold it while you count to 5 with your fingers then tilt head up to blow it out of blowhole. You can also put your hands up on top of head to create the blow hole to “blow” out.

### Snake breath

Breathe in, pause briefly, then breathe out slowly while you make a hissing sound for as long as you can.

### Bunny breath

You can do this breathing either while sitting, or add movement to it.

Sitting version - make "bunny" hands in front of chest and take quick sniffs like a bunny.

Movement version - start in a squat and hop forward while taking quick bunny sniffs.

### Bumblebee breath

Breathe in and pretend you are smelling a flower. As you breathe out, make humming bee sound. Try different ways of making the sound - longer or shorter, high or low sounds.

### 5 - 5 - 10 breathing

Breathe in for 5, hold for 5 and breathe out for 10.

### Count to 10

- Breathe in ONE
- exhale TWO
- Inhale THREE
- Exhale FOUR
- Inhale FIVE
- Exhale SIX
- Inhale SEVEN
- Exhale EIGHT
- Inhale NINE
- Exhale TEN

### 7-11 breathing

Breathe in for 7, exhale for 11.

### 4-7-8 breathing from go zen

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=UxbdX-5e00o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=UxbdX-5e00o)

### Using your hand to take a deep breath aka mountain breathing

Put up one hand, palm facing out and fingers spread apart. Place the index finger of your other hand at the base of your thumb and breathe in while you move your finger up one side of your thumb. Move your finger down the other side of your thumb and breathe out. Do the same thing with the remaining four fingers, and take deep breaths in and out as you move your finger. After you've reached the second side of your pinky finger, you'll have done 5 complete deep breaths.

You can also do this with a close friend or trusted adult. Have them spread their hand out and use your finger to trace their hand and do deep breaths. Or do the

opposite: spread your hand out and have them use their finger and trace yours. You can do deep breaths together!

### Hands to shoulders

Sometimes you breathe from your chest instead of your belly, but it's hard to notice. This is an easy way to figure out if you are moving your chest or your belly when you're breathing. While sitting or standing, put your hands down by your sides. Then bend your arms at your elbows and place them on the front of your shoulders. Try taking a deep breath. If your shoulders are moving a lot, focus more on taking breaths using your belly.

### Rainbow breathing

Arms start at the side of your body; arms go up as you breathe in and go down as you breathe out (arms make a rainbow).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=5&v=O29e4rRMv4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=O29e4rRMv4)

### Volcano breaths

Pretend your hands and arms are like lava flowing from a volcano. Start with your hands in front of your heart, with palms touching. Keeping your hands together, reach straight up and breathe in. Separate your hands and move your arms down to your side and breathe out.

### Explosion breaths

Start in a standing position. Breathe in as you crouch down. Then, jump up, spreading your arms and legs as you breathe out.

### Nostril breathing/ cowabunga breathing

Block one nostril, breathe in for 5, block the other nostril, breathe out for 5.

### Wood chopper breathing

Standing tall with legs hip distance apart. Clasp hands together and raise your arms above your head. Breathe in through nose. Exhale and pull your hands down toward your legs as you say "HA" to "chop" wood.

### Underwater breathing

You are going to hold your breath under water. Breathe in, hold your nose, puff out your cheeks, and hold it for a count of 3. Blow out very slowly and smoothly.

### Icy windows

Imagine you are blowing on a cold window. Take in a deep breathe, open your mouth and breathe out very slowly and steadily.

Can you see how misty the window is?

### Birthday candles

Imagine you are blowing out candles on your birthday cake. Take in a deep breath and blow out the candles with little sharp breaths – one breath for each candle.

See if you notice the muscles just above your tummy moving as you blow.

### Peace breath

Take in a deep breath and as you breathe in, feel as if you are breathing in peace. Feel your whole body filling up with this wonderful feeling of peace. Now breathe out and send this feeling of peace into the room.

Try it with love, gentleness, happiness etc...

### Feathers

Imagine you are blowing feathers into the room. Take in a deep breath and, as you breathe out, blow feathers softly into the air. Play with the feathers as they dance in the air. See how high and far you can blow them.

### Fire breaths

Imagine you are a fire-eater at the circus. Take in a deep breath and, as you breathe out, imagine you are blowing out flames of fire. How far do the flames go?

### Motorbike breaths

Take in a breath, and as you breathe out, put your lips together and hum. See if you can make your lips tickle. Now see if you can move the hum to your nose and make a funny humming noise in your nose. Now see if you can hum into your head – lift your eyebrows and keep humming.

### Bubble breath

Imagine you are blowing bubbles of peace or happiness or love into the room. Take in a breath and imagine you have a pot of bubble liquid. Slowly and gently blow bubbles into the room. As you blow out the bubbles, imagine they are filled with peace and the whole room is filling up with peace. Do you feel peaceful? Now try blowing bubbles of happiness into the room etc...



### Balloon blowing

Imagine you are blowing up a balloon. Take in a deep breath, and steadily and slowly blow up your huge balloon. See the balloon getting bigger and bigger. Now close your eyes and imagine the balloon floating in the air. As you stand there, feel yourself becoming very quiet and peaceful.

### Enormous sighs

Take in a deep breath, and now let out a big sigh as you let the air out. See how noisy you can make your sighs. See who can make the noisiest sigh.

### Bags of air

Imagine your lungs are 2 bags. Take in a slow breath and imagine you are filling the bags with fresh clean air. Hold your breath for a count of 3, and see if you can keep your air bags full. Now breathe out very slowly.

### Doggie sniffs

Imagine you are a dog sniffing. Sniff 4 times as you breathe in. Breathe out slowly.