

The Breath of Life

Notes

Breathing is essential to life. It is one of the most effective ways to calm down our nervous system and reduce stressful patterns. We can use breathing to control our thoughts, reactions, emotions and behaviours.

Here is a simple exercise to reduce panic especially before a test, exam or other stressful situation. There are three stages: inhalation, retention and exhalation. If this exercise is practised regularly, the children will be able to inhale, hold the breath and exhale for longer periods of time.

Meditation

Close your eyes

Place your hands gently on the sides of your ribs

Breathe in through your nose for 2 counts
and feel your lungs expanding

Hold your breath for 2 counts

Then breathe out through your mouth for 4 counts

And again, breathe in through your nose for 2 counts

Hold for 2 counts

And breathe out through your mouth for 4 counts

Notice how your body feels now.

Lets try breathing in for 3 counts

Hold for 3 counts

And breathing out for 6 counts

This time breathe in positive, happy energy

As you hold your breath,

notice the quiet and stillness around you,

When you breathe out,

let go of any feelings or thoughts that make you worried or unhappy.

Let's do this again

but this time as you breathe in,

See a stream of white light

entering your body from the top of your head,

As you hold your breath,

spread the light through your body

When you breathe out,

send out rays of light from your body

To fill the whole room, the whole building, the whole city, the country,

you can go even further into space

Spread your light as far as you wish....

Practise a few more times.

Notice any further changes to your body or your feelings.

Return to normal breathing.

Tranquil Pond

Notes:

This exercise helps children to calm down and experience peace and tranquillity. Visualising still water can help to calm down emotions and reduce anxiety and stress levels.

Meditation:

Sitting comfortably, gently close your eyes.

Take three deep breaths

Breathe in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth

And again breathe in and breathe out

And take one more breath in and breathe out with a sigh

Return to normal breathing

Breathing in and out through your nose

In your mind

See yourself taking a walk into a green forest

on a warm summer's day

See yourself walking under large trees covered with leaves

The sun is shining through the leaves

There is a path in front of you

Walk along the path up a gentle hill

At the top of the hill

appears a large pond

The water is greeny/blue and calm

Trees surround the pond

And you see can see a perfect reflection of the trees in the water

There is a bird standing on an island in the centre of the pond

The bird is as still as a statue

Pause by the pond

and become as still as the bird

Then sit down on a log near to the pond

Look into the water

So you can see your own reflection

You are as still as the water in the pond

There is no movement or sound

apart from your breathing

Listen to your breathing

For a few moments

You feel calm and peaceful.

Connect to the stillness

Inside of you

Take 3 more deep breaths

And open your eyes.

Sunset

Notes

This is a calming exercise for any time of the year. It also assists with visualisation and creative imagination. Share a photo of a sunset (over the sea if possible). Let the child or children explore and discuss the range of colours and share their experiences of seeing sunsets. This exercise can be followed up by creative drawing and encouraging children to draw a sunset so have a rich palette of colours available including, purple, pink, red, orange and yellow and suitable paper and other drawing materials.

Meditation

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose
and slowly breathe out through your mouth

Return to normal breathing,
Breathing in and out through your nose

Picture in your mind the sun setting over the sea

See yourself sitting on a beach watching a sunset
See the colours in the sky
The pinks, reds, oranges and purple
And the sun itself,
a gold ball slowly moving down towards the sea

Notice the reflection of sky in the water
The colours rippling in the waves
As they draw towards the shore

Let's take three deep breaths
In time with the rhythm of the waves
moving forwards and back again

Feel the peace and calmness around you

Look up at the sunset once again
The colours are filling the sky
The sun drops close to the sea
And starts to disappear
Leaving traces of pink and orange behind

Soon it will be dark and night time will arrive
Tomorrow the sun will rise again
And so the cycle continues
Day to night and night to day

Take another deep breath in and out
and open your eyes