

mindful breathing

We pay close attention to the feeling of breathing to help us relax and rest in the moment.

LIFE SKILLS



DURATION 1 to 15 minutes

AGE All ages

LEADING THE GAME

1. Lie on your back with your legs flat on the floor and your arms by your sides. If you like, you can close your eyes. Feel the back of your head touching the floor. Now feel your shoulders, your upper back, your arms, your hands, your lower back, your legs, and your feet touching the floor.
2. Notice what it feels like to breathe in and out. There's no right or wrong way to breathe. It doesn't matter if your breathing is fast or slow, deep or shallow.
3. Pay close attention to your in-breath. Can you notice when you first start to breathe in and then follow the feeling of your in-breath all the way to the very first moment of your out-breath? If it's hard to keep your mind on your in-breath, silently say the word *in* every time you breathe in.

Let the children practice this for a minute or two.

4. Can you notice when you first begin to breathe out and then follow the feeling of your out-breath all the way to the very first moment of your in-breath? If it's hard to keep your mind on your out-breath, silently say the word *out* every time you breathe out.

Let the children practice this for a few breaths.

5. Let's put it together and pay attention to an entire breath, carefully following every moment. If it's hard to keep your mind on your breathing, silently say the word *in* every time you breathe in and the word *out* every time you breathe out.

Let the children practice this for a few breaths.

6. When you're ready, open your eyes and sit up slowly. Take a breath and notice how you feel.

TIPS

1. Lying down is often children's favorite meditation posture, but *Mindful Breathing* can also be practiced sitting or standing.
2. If it's difficult for the children to stay still when they practice *Mindful Breathing* while sitting or standing, they can sway from side to side slowly and with control.
3. Give children and teens an opportunity to talk about their feelings and experiences after *Mindful Breathing*. Check-ins can range from a few words to a full discussion.
4. Start with a few minutes and extend the length of time as the children become more comfortable with the activity.
5. From time to time, have the children check to see if their bodies are tense and remind them to relax.