

10 CALMING BREATHING TECHNIQUES FOR KIDS

1 || Infinity Breathing

Visualizing an infinity symbol, or even tracing the symbol with one finger while breathing in and out, can be a helpful tool for kids to achieve a smooth, even breath cycle. Have kids inhale as they follow one half of the symbol and exhale as they follow the other half.

2 || Balloon Breathing

Another helpful breathing technique is to have kids visualize a balloon inside their bellies. As they breathe in, the balloon expands and as they breathe out, the balloon deflates. One of the best ways to help kids with this visualization is to use a Hoberman Sphere – expanding it as kids breathe in and compressing it as they breathe out.

3 || Alternate Nostril Breathing

For this breathing exercise, kids bring attention to their breath by holding one nostril closed as they breathe in and then holding the other nostril closed as they breathe out.

4 || 4 Count Breathing

Have kids breathe in for a count of 4, then pause to hold onto the breath for a count of 4, breathe out for a count of 4, and pause when the breath empties for a count of 4.

5 || Counting Breaths

For an even easier version of the technique above, simply have kids count their breaths until they get to 10 (counting 1 on the inhale, 2 on the exhale, and so on). Then, have them start over at 1.

6 || Beach Breathing

This is one of our favorite breathing visualization techniques. Have kids imagine that they're standing on the beach. As they inhale, have them imagine that they're drawing a wave up onto the sand. As they exhale, have them imagine the water receding back into the ocean or lake.

7 || Take 5 Breathing

Have kids hold up one hand or place the hand on their desk or table. Have them place the index finger of their opposite hand on the outside of the bottom knuckle of their pinky finger. As they breathe in, have them use their index finger to trace up the outside of the pinky finger. As they exhale, they trace down the other side of the finger. Then inhale – up the ring finger, exhale – down the other side of the ring finger. And so on until they get to their thumb.

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8 || Draw a Square Breathing

This one adds a visual component to the 4 Count Breathing described above. On their desk or table, have kids trace a horizontal line with their fingers for a count of 4 as they breathe in (the top of the square). Then, trace downward to form the side of the square as they hold the breath for a count of 4. Then they trace horizontally again to make the bottom of the square as they exhale. And finally they trace upward to form the other side of the square as they hold their breath out. Repeat.

9 || Making an Object Move With the Breath

This is a great one to try with younger kids! Have the child lie on the floor with a toy or other small object resting on her tummy. Tell her to try to make the object rise and fall slowly by breathing deeply.

10 || Movements and Breathing

Yoga for kids is a perfect way to pair movement and breathing. Slow, thoughtful movements can help with pacing and timing of breathing. This Rainbow Breathing exercise from Go Noodle is another great way to use body movement with breathing.