

**USE WITH:**

Individual students, small group, or whole class

**GRADE LEVEL:**

Upper elementary, middle school, or high school

**CONTEXT:**

Remote friendly

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Find Calm with “Belly Breathing”

Introduce deep, attentive breathing practices to increase students' mindfulness and lower stress.

Created by [Breathe for Change](#)

Description:

This guided breathing exercise and reflection can help protect students against stress.

Prep time needed:

5 minutes

Est. time to complete:

7 minutes

Steps:

1. Ask students to pause what they are doing.
2. Have students place their hands on their bellies and invite them to soften their gazes or close their eyes. Do not make all students close their eyes.
3. Ask students to notice their breathing. They might feel their bellies move with each breath, or notice the air moving in and out of their bodies.
4. Guide students through mindful deep breathing. With their hands still on their bellies, invite students to breathe in deeply through their nose, noticing their breath move into their chest, then to their ribs, and down to their belly. Ask students to exhale slowly through their nose, noticing their breath move up from their belly, to their ribs, and up to their chest.
5. Ask students to continue to breathe deeply and mindfully with you for two minutes.
6. When ready, invite students to return to their natural breathing and open their eyes.

7. Ask students to share how they feel after doing this breathing exercise. Do they feel different than they did before? What was it like to pay attention to their breathing?

Tips for Educators:

- The first time you introduce this activity, preview what's going to happen to ease any anxiety about trying something new. Consider saying, "We are going to try something together called 'Belly Breathing' that can help us feel calm. We will breathe deeply together and then talk about it."
- Allow students who prefer to keep their eyes open during the activity to do so. This will help make the activity more comfortable.
- This activity can become a consistent practice or it can be used to address challenges as they arise.
- If teaching online, ask students to find a comfortable position near the computer before beginning the activity. Even remotely, Belly Breathing can be a great way to begin your online class, give students a brain break, or help students calm down and focus before a test.
- If teaching online, students can reflect on the experience by sharing with the larger group, in the chat feature, or in breakout rooms.

Inspired by:

1. Zoogman, S., Goldberg, S. B., Hoyt, W. T., & Miller, L. (2014). Mindfulness interventions with youth: A meta-analysis. *Mindfulness*, 6(2), 290-302.

Related Materials:

Cultivating Presence and Mindfulness
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YEtxlYnqI3YTRBY8D7kwpHYTheTJ-fg-/view?usp=sharing>