

## BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Breathing exercises help increase the lung capacity; in-fact on average we only use 1 / 3 of our total lung capacity each day. Breathing exercises not only help with respiratory problems, but they are also a great way for children to feel calm and relaxed and help them learn to deal with different emotions. The more children (and adults!) practice breathing exercises, the more they will be able to do them naturally at a time of stress and/or anxiety.

Breathing exercises can be done at the beginning of the school day to energise and focus children, after a break/lunch to re-focus children and/or at the end of the day to send them home calm.

If at any time a child feels dizzy, they can return to normal breathing and return to the activity when they feel ready.

All breaths should be repeated a minimum of 3 times.

### Deep Breaths to Calm Down

This is a simple but very effective way of helping children to feel grounded and quiet. The breath is in through the nose and as children breathe out through their mouth they make a long sighing sound. Pause and repeat up to 5 times.

Adding movement to this, helps children to keep their focus, you can simply ask children to have their hands by their side and reach them up above their head with the breath in and down as they breathe out. The arms should be moved slowly to represent the breath.

### Finger Breathing

A great way to help children calm themselves down and re-focus - children can do this without being noticed, such as by placing their hand under their desk during a test.

The breath is in through the nose and out through the mouth.

Take your index finger and trace the up your thumb as you breathe in and down your thumb as you breathe out, breathe in as you trace up your index finger and breathe out as you trace down.

## Concertina Breath - Space Breathing

An energising breathing exercise that gets oxygen to the brain and can help children to feel more active if they are lethargic and lacking in energy.

Interlace the fingers under the chin, breathe in through the nose and at the same time raise the elbows up and take the head back. Breathe out through the mouth and lower the elbows down again.

## Star Breathing

A great way to help keep children focussed on their breathing. Using the supplied handout – ask children to trace the star as they breathe in through their nose and out through their mouth.

## Bhramari Breath - Humming Breath

Children are taught to make a low humming noise which can help them feel more relaxed and can be used at home to help children feel sleepy.

The children gently place their fingers in their ears and breathe in through the nose and then hum their exhalation and continue to do so for a minute or two with their eyes closed.

## Breathing in a Flower and blowing out a candle

Slows the heart rate helping children to feel calmer and more relaxed.

As you breathe in through your nose, imagine you are smelling a lovely flower and as you breathe out through your mouth imagine you are blowing out a candle.

## Colour Breath

Diffuse negativity or anxiety, particularly at the start of the day if getting to school or home life has been rushed.

As the children breathe in, they think of the colour blue which is restful and healing and as they breathe out, they think of the colour black which helps them to let go of difficult thoughts and feelings.