

Mindful Breathing Technique

Help Kids Become Aware of the Power of their Breath

When parents ask me what they can do to support their children's emotional resilience, I tell them that the first thing they can do is teach them about the power of their breath.

By learning to control their breath, they can calm and soothe themselves when they feel scared, nervous, anxious, stressed or overwhelmed. They can even use their breath to help them stay focused or to give them a boost of energy!

There are lots of different breathing techniques that I will share, but the first step in learning to use the breath as a tool is simply to help your children heighten their awareness of their breath and their ability to control it.

Mindful 2:3 Belly Breathing

After practicing with your kids, we want to hear from you! Email me to share your experience!

1 Find a place to sit with your kids where they can sit upright comfortably.

Note: The first time you do this (at least), I recommend that you sit side-by-side or facing each other. Doing it together will allow your child or children to observe you and will provide a nice opportunity for you to connect.

2 Do a self-check. Ask your child to notice how they're feeling at the moment.

Do they feel calm, relaxed, happy, tired, agitated, irritable, frustrated, etc. Ask them to just notice without placing any judgement on how they feel, good or bad, from either of you.

Note: Don't try this for the first time when your child is in a high-stress or anxious state.

3 Take 2 long, deep inhales and exhales. It's preferable to take these breaths in and out through the nose.

If breathing through the nose is not comfortable for them, breathing through their mouth is fine, too. Instruct them to focus on the movement of their belly as they breathe, allowing their bellies to expand fully and empty completely.

4 Take 3 normal breaths.

Ask them to notice any differences in their normal breath. Is it quicker, more shallow, how does their belly move when they breathe normally, etc. Again, just have them bring mindful awareness to it.

5 Repeat this series of breaths 3 times.

6 Repeat the self-check.

7 Talk to your child about their experience.

What did they notice about their breath? What did they notice about their bodies when they did these two styles of breath? How did it feel to breathe normally versus taking long, slow deep breaths?



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