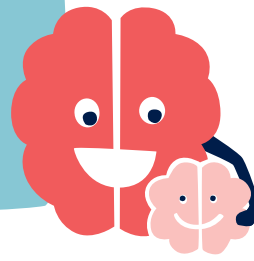


# Mindful Breathing



Parent Resource

Mindfulness is a focus on being present, in the moment, without judgement or distractions. Mindfulness is essential in enhancing your mental fitness by cultivating a balanced, focused, and resilient mind. Engaging in mindful breathing exercises can have positive effects for you and your family including:

- Relaxing the body
- Refocusing the mind
- Lowering the heart rate
- Reducing anxiety and stress
- Increasing the body's oxygen levels

A mindful breathing practice can be beneficial for building emotional adaptability, easing the transition to bed, or preparing for a busy day.

You only need a short amount of time, a quiet location and a calm space where you won't be interrupted to commence your mindful breathing. Give yourself and your child the opportunity to build their mental fitness by practising these exercises, and with time, they will become easier as your mind and body will become more familiar with relaxing into the breathing exercise.

## Mindful Breathing Exercise

- 1** Find a comfortable place to sit up straight, with your feet flat on the floor. This could be inside or outside.
- 2** Close your eyes.
- 3** Place one hand on your stomach. Begin by slowly breathing through your nose, noticing your chest rising and filling up with air.
- 4** When your lungs feel full and your chest rises, hold your breath. Think about the fullness in your chest and stomach.
- 5** Slowly breathe out through your mouth, noticing your chest emptying and your shoulders lowering and stomach relaxing.
- 6** Repeat this exercise another 2 times and complete 3 breathing cycles.
- 7** Consider how you're feeling now after completing this breathing exercise. Talk to your child about their feelings and ask if they notice any changes.

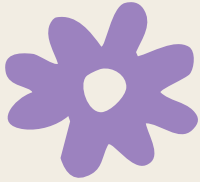
Let's build our mental fitness together

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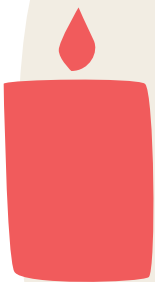
Try these fun and easy-to-learn breathing exercises that combine imagery with mindful breathing, making them especially engaging for your little ones.

By keeping sessions short, frequent, and engaging, children are more likely to enjoy and benefit from mindful breathing exercises.



### Smell the Flowers

Ask your child to picture themselves smelling a beautiful flower. Have them breathe in deeply through their nose and exhale through their mouth. This simple exercise is a great way for your child to begin learning deep breathing techniques. Repeat 3-5 times.



### Blow out the Candles

Ask your child to imagine blowing out the candles on a pretend birthday cake. Have them take a deep breath in through their mouth and blow out strongly through their mouth while they imagine the candle blowing out. Repeat 3-5 times.

*After mastering the techniques above, your child can combine them. Encourage your child to start by "smelling the flowers" through their nose, holding the breath for a few seconds, and then "blowing out the candles" on the exhale. Continue 3-5 times, inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth.*



### Feather Breathing

Provide a feather for your child to hold. Ask them to take a deep breath in and then blow out gently to make the feather float in the air. Watch the feather as it moves through the air and land. Repeat 3-5 times watching the feather rise and fall.



### Shape Breathing

Draw a shape like a triangle or square on a sheet of paper. Instruct your child to breathe in along one side of the shape, hold the breath along the next side, and exhale along the final side. Repeat this 3-5 times.



### Head, Neck & Shoulder Roll

Instruct your child to take slow breaths in and out. At the same time, ask your child to start slowly rolling their head back and forth, or shrugging their shoulders up and down. Combining breathing with simple movement can help your child to redirect their energy.

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