

Introduction to Mindful Breathing

Mindful breathing is the foundation of mindfulness practices. This brief exercise will acquaint you and your child with this simple practice that you will be using with each mindfulness exercise going forward.

- Each exercise takes 10 minutes or less.
- Familiarize yourself with the exercise before using with your child.
- Use the script to guide the exercise. Adjust language as needed.
- All exercises begin with **Breath Awareness** followed by a **Mindfulness Activity** that teaches a practical mindfulness skill.
- Each exercise ends with **Reflecting Questions** to discuss with your child. Invite your child to stay in mindful silence until the Reflecting Questions.

Breath Awareness

I thought it would be interesting if we started doing some mindfulness exercises that could get us ready to have a good day. Have you heard the word mindfulness before? (pause)

I understand that mindfulness means paying attention to what is happening right now in our bodies, minds, and all around us. When we do this, through deep breathing and focusing attention, we can focus and not be thinking about and doing other things. We might feel more peaceful and at ease when we are quiet and still, concentrating on what is happening right this moment. And it can help us feel less stressed out when life gets complicated. Let's try a simple mindfulness exercise and then we'll talk about it.

Let's find a comfortable position and sit straight up, placing your hands on your thighs. You can close your eyes if you like or just gaze softly downward in front of you. (pause)

Notice how that feels. (pause)

Place your hands on your belly and notice what happens when you breathe in through your nose (pause) and out through your mouth. (pause)

Notice how your belly pushes out like a balloon when you breathe in and falls back toward your body when you breathe out. Feel the rhythm of your breathing as your belly rises when you breathe in and falls when you breathe out. (pause)

Let's breathe like this with the belly rising and falling for three big breaths. (pause)

Notice where you feel the breath most prominently. Is it in your nostrils? Chest? Belly? (pause)



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Just notice as you continue to pay attention to the rhythm of your breathing for three more breaths. (pause)

If your eyes are closed, open them now. Thanks for doing this with me.

Reflecting

Take this opportunity to have a conversation about your shared experience using the following reflecting questions:

Reflecting Questions

- What?** What did it feel like to sit in your mindful posture? What did you notice?
- So What?** What did it feel like when your belly was rising? When it was falling?
- Now What?** How do you feel now? Would you like to do this again?



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