

Breathing exercises

Breathing to relax

Preparation for visualization

Read the following relaxation exercise using a slow and low tone of voice. Depending on the dynamics of your classroom, children may either be lying on the floor or sat at tables, hence the alternatives at the start of the relaxation exercise.

Lie on your back or rest your head on your arms and the table in front of you. Make sure you feel comfortable ... wriggle your body around until you feel comfortable.

Now that you are lying or sitting still, close your eyes and let your body become nice and floppy.

You are beginning to relax. Now let's make our bodies nice and calm. Focus on your breathing ... think about your breathing ... about the air going in (*pause and hold own breath*) and out (*pause as you breathe out*) ... in (*pause and hold own breath*) and out (*pause as you breathe out*).

Take a nice big breath and hold it (*breathe in loudly so that the children can hear it*) ... and breathe out (*blow out so that the children can hear it*).

Let's do that again ... a nice deep breath in (*breathe in loudly and slowly to model the breathing*) ... and breathe out, nice and slowly (*breathe out loudly and slowly to model the breathing*). Think about the air coming in through your nose and travelling all the way down into your lungs ... breath in ... and going out through your mouth ... travelling all the way back up from your chest to your mouth ... breathe out ... and again ... coming in through your nose ... breath in ... and going out through your mouth ... breathe out.

(Now pause before beginning to read chosen visualization sequence.)

Changing shapes

Start with 'Breathing to relax' sequence (page 11) followed by:

Imagine you are holding a ball shape in your hands ... in front of you ... a sphere. It might be still or maybe it is slowly spinning around. It is a soft pale purple colour. Notice that there are no corners or edges ... it is completely smooth and one continuous curved surface.

(pause)

Watch carefully as the sphere changes into a cube shape and the colour changes from purple to blue. Move the cube shape ... a box shape, around in your hands. Run the palms of your hands over the flat faces ... six faces. Count them in your mind. Run your fingers along the edges and pause each time your finger reaches a corner.

(pause)

Watch carefully as the cube changes into a triangular-based pyramid and the colour changes from blue to yellow. It's a tetrahedron ... four triangular faces. Move the pyramid around in your hands. Touch the sharp pointy corners and neat edges ... run your fingers along the edges where two faces meet.

(pause)

The pyramid is going to change into a different 3D shape now ... a shape that you choose. The colour is changing as well ... into your favourite colour.

(pause)

Look, your shape is starting to grow in your hands. Carefully place your 3D solid shape on the ground in front of you. Watch as it continues to grow ... getting larger ... and larger ... and larger ... until it is big enough for you to step inside.

(pause)

Visualization sequences

Step inside your shape and sit down on the floor. All the colour from your shape is going to gently shower down onto your body like fine rain ... it feels wonderful being covered in your favourite colour.

(pause)

It's time to leave your shape now ... so stand up and carefully step outside of your 3D shape. Watch as your shape slowly gets smaller ... and smaller ... and smaller ... until it is small enough to fit into your hands again.

End with 'Waking up' sequence (page 12).

Breathing exercises

Waking up

Ending visualization

Pause for at least 10 seconds to mark the end of the chosen visualization sequence before reading the following wake up exercise.

Now begin to focus your mind on your breathing again ... air coming in (*pause*) ... and out (*pause*) ... air coming in (*pause*) ... and out (*pause*).

On your next breath in take a deep breath (*model a loud breath*) ... and breathe out (*model loudly*) ... and again ... breath in (*pause*) ... and out (*pause*).

Keeping your eyes closed we are going to slowly start to wake ourselves up. Begin to move your toes a little bit ... and your ankles (*pause*).

Begin to stretch and wriggle your fingers ... and wrists.

Now move and stretch your legs ... and now your arms as if you have just woken up (*pause*).

Keeping your eyes closed ... sit up when you are ready (*pause*).

Now gently rub your face with the palms of your hands to wake up your face ... and open your eyes when you are ready.