

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.)

Spring

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

There's a garden in front of you with a swing in the middle ... a large horse chestnut tree stands in the corner. Walk over to the swing and sit on it ...

You are sitting on the swing ... push yourself backwards and begin to make the swing move ... swaying forwards and backwards and (*pause*) ... forwards and backwards (*pause*).

It's spring time. Feel the warm sun on your face and feel a light cool breeze through your hair. You're wearing a jacket ... and your favourite clothes. Take a look at yourself ... these are the clothes you always feel really comfortable in.

(pause)

Push your feet into the air to make the swing go a bit higher. Notice the fresh green grass on the ground beneath you ... and the yellow trumpets of the daffodils bobbing in the breeze. The horse chestnut tree in the corner of the garden is covered in large green leaves and they move in the wind like large hands waving at you (*pause*) ... this makes you giggle inside.

(pause)

Put your head back a little bit and look up at the fluffy white clouds in the pale blue sky. It has been raining but has stopped now and the rain and the sunshine have left a beautiful rainbow arching through the sky ... past the clouds and trailing off down to the ground in the distance.

(pause)

Breathe in deeply and smell the beautiful flower perfume that's filling the air in the garden. You can see something moving by the tree ... it looks like a rabbit ... yes, it's a rabbit ... its body is curved over with a smooth dome of fur across its back. It looks up at you ... twitches its nose and then carries on nibbling the grass.

(pause)

It's time now to leave this spring garden. As you sit on your swing ... take one final look around.

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