

The Benefits of Breathing Techniques

Learning breathing techniques can be a great coping skill for children to utilize so they can learn to overcome challenging or stressful situations independently.

Studies suggest that utilizing breathing techniques helps to:

- Regulate emotions and control emotions
- Decreases stress and anxiety
- Encourages more appropriate social behaviors and decisions
- Helps to remain calm
- Increases sustained attention and focus
- Slows your heart rate
- Lowers blood pressure

These techniques help get our bodies physically back to a calm, focused and regulated state. It helps to prepare our bodies and brains to return to or prepare to start engaging in an activity or event.

Examples of breathing techniques:

- Square breathing
 - Inhale for four seconds while tracing a line upward, hold breath for four seconds while tracing line across, exhale for four seconds while tracing line downward, hold breath for four seconds while tracing line across.
 - You can use a visual to support this breathing technique by drawing a square on a piece of paper and use for reference when engaging in the technique.
- Using bubbles
 - Inhale, and slowly breathe out into the bubble strip to make bubbles. This helps slow down breathing to make it a more effective and controlled breath
- Using your child's favorite stuffed animal

- Lay on your back with your stuffed animal placed on your stomach. Practice inhaling to move the stuffed animal upward, and exhaling to move the stuffed animal downward.
- Animal breathing
 - Snake breath: Breathe in, hold breath for 2 seconds, breathe out while making a 'hissing' noise. Repeat 5x.
 - Bunny breath: Breathe in quickly, 'bunny sniffs' 3 times, then breathe out one longer time. Repeat 5x.

Final note on breathing:

- To ensure proper form of these breathing techniques, it is recommended that children are engaging in deep belly breathing, not shallow chest breathing. Here is a resource to ensure you are breathing through your belly!
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xQJ2O4b5TM

Information retrieved from:

<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2018/09/04/deep-breathing-exercises-for-children-2/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xQJ2O4b5TM

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/deep-breathing-exercises-for-kids>

http://sites.isdschools.org/grade2_remote_learning_resources/useruploads/04_07/2nd_Counseling.April7,Bryant_MillCreek.pdf