

5 kids meditations

to do at home with your child



Peace Breath

Begin sitting or standing in mountain pose. Close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply in and out through your nose. Imagine that your heart is filling up with love and peace. With each inhale fill your heart more and more until you feel it overflow with love and peace, and now you have plenty to share. Can you feel it? On your exhale, breathe out very slowly and silently say "peeaaacccceee." Repeat several times and as you say the word "peace". Now take a few rounds saying "looovveee" as you exhale. Notice the warm and nice energy you are creating by paying attention to your breath while repeating these uplifting words. The energy you've created flow out from your heart into the world. Now imagine that you send this flow of peace and love to your classmates, your community, and the world. Imagine the feeling of peace and love reaching all of the people, places, and animals that need it the most. Do this for a few minutes, and just pause and notice how you feel before you open your eyes and go about your day.

What does peace mean to you? Are there people and places you know that might need some peace? How can you practice peace today? Try practice peace in your classroom, on the playground and at home.

Balloon Breath

Relax your body and begin to take deep inhales and slow exhales through the nose. Place both hands on your belly and and imagine your belly like a balloon. Take a slow, deep breath and fill your belly up with air, as if you're about to blow up a very large balloon and expand your belly as much as you can. Slowly let the air out of the balloon (through the nose) as you

release the breath from the belly. Each time you exhale you feel the entire body relax, as air is slowly being released from the balloon.

Now, pretend your holding a balloon (of your favorite color) against your lips and start blowing air into it exhaling through your mouth and then inhaling through your nose. Take a slow, deep inhale through the nose, filling up your tummy with air and blow more air into the imaginary balloon, making it bigger and bigger with each exhalation. Stretch your arms open and overhead as the balloon gets bigger and bigger and grow with your balloon. When your balloon is totally full, hold your breath at the last inhale, and then “pop the balloon” or release the balloon by spinning around in a circle and fall to the ground as you exhale all the air out of your belly.

Muscle Relaxation Technique

1. Sit or lie down comfortably and close your eyes. You can use pillows or blankets to make yourself as comfortable as you can be.
2. Take a few deep, cleansing breaths as you begin to relax. In and exhaling through your nose.
3. Bring all of your attention to your right foot, noticing how it feels. Squeeze the right foot, making a fist with your entire right foot and all five toes; tense and squeeze it tightly. Hold this tension for two deep breaths.
4. Then release all tension in the right foot suddenly. Relax it completely and notice the tension release. You may feel a tingling sensation in the foot. Take a deep breath, and then move on to the opposite foot...

5. With your attention on your left foot, squeeze it, making a fist with your entire left foot and all five toes; tense and squeeze it tightly. Hold this tension for two deep breaths. Then release the tension and fully relax. Take a deep breath, and ...
6. Move slowly up and around the body, squeezing one body part at a time to create tension, immediately followed by the contrasting sensation of release and ease. Follow each part with a deep, cleansing breath. For example, from the beginning:
 - Right foot, left foot
 - Right ankle and calf, left ankle and calf
 - Right knee, left knee
 - Right thigh, left thigh
 - Both feet and legs
 - Hips
 - Butt
 - Belly
 - Entire lower body, from tummy down
 - Chest and heart
 - Right arm, left arm
 - Right hand, left hand
 - Shoulders

- Neck
- Face
- Whole body at once (do this one twice)

When you're finished guiding your child through the relaxation technique, make sure they spend at least a few minutes in quiet, encouraging them to keep their breathing slow and steady.

Open Heart Meditation

1. Close your eyes and sit comfortably and quietly. Start focusing on your breathing. Count to four or five on your inhale and count on four or five on your exhale. Focus on an even count and stay here for a couple of minutes.
2. Now shift your focus to your heart. Notice anything that feels heavy. As you inhale, feel this being lifted up and gently removed from your heart. As you exhale, feel it leave your body with your breath.
3. On the next inhale, feel light entering your body and reaching your heart. As you exhale, feel this light filling your heart.
4. Continue doing this, breath by breath for several minutes. Breathing slowly yet following the natural rise and fall of the breath.
5. After a while, notice how you feel, your heart being warm, open and light. Take a moment to give thanks and send love to everyone in your life!

Alternate Nostril Breathing or “Switch Breath”

One of the most beneficial breathing practices from the yoga tradition for children is Alternate Nostril Breathing or “Switch Breath” as we call it in kids yoga. Put simply, this is a breathing technique where you breathe out and then in one nostril followed by out and then in the other nostril, using the fingers in a specific way to close off the nostril not in use. In kids yoga we use the first finger of each hand to close off the nostrils, unlike the traditional method.

As we go about our day we predominantly breathe through one nostril only which often results in an imbalanced breath. When we consciously control the rhythm, frequency and duration of our breath through each nostril it brings equal amounts of oxygen to both sides of the brain for improved brain function. Using this breathing technique we can improve attention and reduce stress and anxiety. So here is how we do it:

Take a full breath in through your nose. Use your right thumb to plug the right nostril and exhale out the left. Inhale through the left nostril and then use your left thumb to plug the left nostril. Exhale out the right nostril, then inhale through the right nostril. Right thumb plugs the right nostril, exhaling out the left nostril, and then inhaling out the left nostril. Switch to plug the left nostril with your left thumb again. Repeat the steps, alternating between the nostrils for 3 – 5 minutes.

Take a moment to pause after this breathing meditation, noticing how you are feeling and allowing your natural breathing pattern to take over again.

Langhana & Brahmara Breath

These are two different ways to breathe to change your energy level. Langhana breath brings your energy down as it is quieting, calming and encourages an inward focus. Brahmara breath revitalizes you as it is stimulating and energizing with a quality of alertness.

Langhana Breath

In this practice there is a greater awareness and attention placed on the exhale, which should be longer than the inhale.

1. Start in seated position, with your eyes closed and breathe through your nose for a few breaths.
2. Begin to silently count your breathing pattern. For example, inhale one, two, exhale, one, two... (you may want to count out loud for your child). Make sure the count isn't too long and that your child can comfortably inhale and exhale for the counted length of the breath.
3. Once you are breathing at a steady pace for a few seconds, start to make your exhale longer than your inhale. You can start by counting, inhale one, two; exhale one, two, three. If this feels ok try; inhale one, two; exhale, one, two, three, four...
4. Continue this pattern for as long as you feel comfortable. When you're ready to finish, come back to an even breath for a round or two, and then gently open your eyes.

Brahmana Breath

In this practice there is a greater awareness and attention placed on the inhale, which should be longer than the exhale.

1. Start in seated position, with your eyes closed, and breathe through your nose for a few breaths.
2. Begin to silently count your breathing pattern. For example, inhale one, two, exhale, one, two... (you may want to count out loud for your child). Make sure the count isn't too long and that your child can comfortably inhale and exhale for the counted length of breath.
3. Once you are breathing at a steady pace for a few rounds, start to make your inhale longer than your exhale. You can start by counting, inhale one, two, three; exhale one, two. If this feels ok try; inhale one, two, three, four; exhale, one, two...
4. Make sure you are getting all of your air out on the exhale. This might mean that you need to exhale more strongly than usual.
5. Continue this pattern for as long as it feels comfortable. When you're ready to finish come back to an even breath for a round or two, and then gently open your eyes.

Take a moment after each meditation to help your child pay attention to how he or she is feeling. Ask if they notice a difference in how their body and mind feels. Is it more still, more quiet now? How does the breath feel? Do they notice how much space there is inside when they take a full breath in? Do they notice how they can control their energies by paying more attention to their breath? Talk about how you can't control what other people say or do or what happens to you, however you can decide how you react to a situation.