

This is a great calming activity or coping tool to use when students need to cool down after an active lesson, are having a stressful moment, or need an emotion regulation strategy. While geared towards K-1 students, this calming activity could be used with students of any age.

This emotional regulation and coping tool is called square breathing. This breathing technique goes like this:

Breathe in for four seconds
Hold for four seconds
Breathe out for four seconds
Hold for four seconds

It's unclear exactly what makes it work, whether it's the act of breathing that is calming, the specific timing of this technique, or the fact that you have to concentrate and count to do it correctly so you aren't focused on whatever's worrying you. But it really is a very calming activity.

Practice Activity

Students will use Lester the bird's flying to visualize when to breathe. When Lester flies up, they'll breathe in, and when Lester flies down, they'll breathe out.

Link to Lester the Bird Video:

<https://vimeo.com/320838135>

Or students can use the attached visual of Lester the bird to practice square breathing. Start on the bird marked 'START' and follow the numbers in order. When Lester goes up, take a deep breath IN. When Lester does down, breath OUT. Try taking deep breaths in/out that last four seconds while slowly tracking Lester's flight with your finger.



START

Connect each Lester by following the numbers in order.

When Lester is flying up, take a **deep breath IN**. When Lester is flying down, **breathe OUT**.