

Deep Breathing

- Begin by asking how long they have been in school. Tell students that as school goes on, things get more stressful, teachers get more demanding, there is more homework, etc. All this produces a lot of tension and stress.
- Draw a “T” chart on the board, writing tense on the left and relaxed on the right
 - Explain what the word tense means then ask students how they feel (use feeling words) when they are tense or how they know they are tense when they are tense, writing them on the board
 - Explain what the word relaxed means then ask students how they feel when they are relaxed or how they know they are relaxed when they are relaxed, writing them on the board
- Affects of tension and relaxation on the body
 - The brain, muscles, and body need good blood flow and a lot of oxygen to work well
 - When tense, we have bad blood flow and low oxygen in our blood
 - When relaxed, we have very good blood flow and a lot of oxygen in our blood
- Ask the students which side they want to fall on, or how they want to feel, tense or relaxed?
- How To Do It:
 - When you are stressed and tense, you breathe shallow, which means less air or oxygen to the body and brain. This means you can’t move as well and your brain doesn’t think as well or make as good of decisions. You can’t remember stuff as well, get moody with friends and others, do worse on tests and class work, etc. It’s bad for not only you but people around you.
 - Deep breathing will increase air or oxygen to entire body so the brain will think and make better choices. You will be able to remember better, focus better, resolve conflicts better and make better choices, do better on class work and tests, etc.
 - Specifically explain that deep breathing has positive effects when used in school
 - Think better and more clearly
 - Feel happier
 - More patient
 - Better attention and focus
 - Less agitated, aggressive, and likely to fight and bicker
 - More friendly
 - Less anxious and nervous
- Lungs are like kitchen sponges. Ask if students have ever squeezed a kitchen sponge and let it go. Lungs are just like this, but with air instead of water. If you squeeze them, all the air gets pushed out. If you let go of them, they expand back to their original size and fill up with air, like a kitchen sponge does with water.

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- Lungs cannot squeeze themselves though, so what in the body squeezes lungs to push air out and then to make room for them to expand back to their original sizes? Muscles called the diaphragm.
- Draw a funny guy or woman on the board with a big nose, big moles, hair sticking out of their nose, etc. Draw the entire body of the person. Tell students that if they could see into the person's chest they would see the lungs covering much of the area (draw the lungs in the chest).
- Tell students the diaphragm is a muscle (draw a line below the lungs horizontally) that pushes up, squeezing the lungs and pushing air out, and then pushing down, making room for the lungs to expand and fill back up, taking air in or breathing in (you can draw arrows up and down by the diaphragm line while saying this). Explain that when the diaphragm pushes down, it pushes all your guts down and out, which is why your stomach bulges out when you take a big breath.
- Now number next to the picture 1-5 vertically. Explain students will learn a 5 step method to taking the ultimate deep breath to relax.
 1. Slowly breathe in through nose
 2. Stomach, not chest should expand outward (feel stomach move with hand)
 3. Now with the stomach as far out as it can go, suck in a little more air by lifting and pushing the chest up and out (feel chest expand with other hand)
 4. Hold breath for 2-3 seconds
 5. Slowly breathe out through mouth quietly
- Practice Deep Breathing
 - Now have students sit straight in chairs (because for the stomach to stick out to let the lungs get more room to expand) you cannot be slouching.
 - Do steps 1-5, guiding students through each step as you do it with them.
 - Now repeat this over and over for several minutes.
 - Relaxing music or sounds may be played during practice and lights turned down or off.
- After practicing, ask students how they feel
- Explain that students' homework is to use deep breathing during school to help them when feeling tense, uptight, nervous, anxious, inattentive, unfocused, frustrated, impatient, annoyed, aggressive, angry, upset, etc.
 - This may be during a test, before a test, after an argument, during class work, before volunteering, etc.
 - Whatever amount of time you have, use it to deep breath. That may only allow time for one deep breath, which is okay if that's all you have time for.