



Focus Resets



Focus resets are short, calming strategies, like breathing exercises, sensory activation, or grounding techniques, that help students regulate their emotions and reset their mind for learning. These activities activate the parasympathetic nervous system (reducing stress and improving attention) emotional control, and executive functioning.

1

Sensory Motor: CRUMPLE

Only using 1 hand, crumple a piece of paper into a ball, laying it on your desk. Using the same one hand, uncrumple it.
*Try DOUBLE CRUMPLE- with a piece of paper per hand.

2

Breathing Exercise: FINGER BREATHING

Hold one hand up, and slowly trace each finger with the other hand, breathe in as you trace up, and breathe out as you trace down.

3

Sensory Motor: LAZY 8's

Students trace a sideways figure eight in the air with one or both hands to support visual tracking, midline crossing, and brain hemisphere integration.

4

Grounding Technique: 5-4-3-2-1

(Alone or with an elbow partner)

Name:

5 things you see
4 things you feel
3 things you hear
2 things you smell
1 thing you taste

5

Breathing Exercise: BALLOON BREATHING

Take a deep breath in and imagine blowing up a big balloon—exhale slowly as if you're letting the air out gently

6

Sensory Motor: DOUBLE DOODLES

Draw mirrored shapes with both hands at the same time. It strengthens bilateral coordination, focus, & fine motor control. You can choose a shape for those who need a scaffold. (E.g. square, star, leaf, sun)

7

Grounding Technique: COLOR SCAN

Ask students to find and name 3–5 objects around them that are a specific color (e.g., blue, red, green) to help reset their focus by engaging visual attention and environmental awareness.

8

Sensory Motor: FINGER TAPS

Tap each finger to thumb in a slow, rhythmic pattern. Start from pointer to pinky-then reverse. Try REVERSE FINGER TAPS- where one hand goes from pointer to pinky and the other starts from pinky to pointer simultaneously.

9

Sensory Motor: PALM PRESS

Press palms together firmly and completely, count slowly to 20, then release slowly- peeling your palms away from each other one part at a time.

10

Grounding Technique: TEXTURE TOUCH

Find or imagine three different textures to help them reset focus by engaging their senses and grounding their attention in the present moment. (E.g. smooth, rough, hard, soft, squishy, fuzzy, wrinkled, velvety, prickly.)

11

Sensory Motor: SANDTIMERS/ CALM JARS

Flip the timer, or shake the jar and what the glitter, bubbles, or sand settle while taking in slow breaths and preparing to refocus.

12

Breathing Exercise: SPIRAL BREATHING

Slowly trace a spiral shape with your finger while breathing in as you move outward and breathing out as you move inward, letting your breath follow the motion.

13

Breathing Exercise: BOX BREATHING

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4, breathe out for 4, and hold again for 4...repeat the box pattern to stay calm and focused.

14

Sensory Motor: SCENT RESET

Gently apply lotion or smell a calming scent like lavender or citrus, and take slow breaths while focusing on the smell to help your body relax and your mind refocus.

15

Grounding Technique: VISUALIZATION PROMPT

Ask students to close their eyes and picture a calming scene, object, or place in detail to help reset their focus by engaging imagination and activating visual-spatial thinking. (Cozy Spot, Beach scene)

16

Sensory Motor: SENSORY VIDEO CLIP

Watch a short calming video quietly, focusing on the movement or sounds, and take slow breaths until minds settle & are ready to return to learning. (E.g. underwater, kinetic sand, ASMR, or other 'oddly satisfying' one)