

Breathing Activities

Finger Breathing

Purpose: To slow the heart and breathing rate, and improve focus.

Hands are an awesome tool to help focus our breath. They provide a repetitive action and are with us everywhere we go!

Preparation:

Nothing — just your own hands!

Instructions:

1. Discuss with the students the importance of controlling their breath and the benefits that repetitive breathing has on their ability to focus and control their emotions.
2. Demonstrate how to use your hands to breathe. You will use the index finger of one hand to trace the outline of your other hand. To start, inhale slowly while tracing up the outside of your pinky finger and exhale slowly while tracing down the inside of your pinky finger. Repeat with your ring finger, followed by your middle finger, pointer finger, and thumb.
3. Allow students to try on their own, ensuring that they are proceeding slowly through the course of their fingers.

Modifications:

1. Use this technique prior to stressful activities in the classroom such as writing tests or exams. Guide students to develop a ritual before these stressful activities that can help students focus.
2. After gym class is another great time to help students bring down their heart and breathing rate. Using this technique during cool down rituals helps students develop lifelong habits.