

YOGA AND MINDFULNESS

ACTIVITY 1: BREATHING EXERCISES

Try out the following breathing exercises from Cosmic Kids Yoga and Action For Healthy Kids. Spend five minutes or more on each breathing exercise. Try them throughout the day and week when you get stressed or anxious.

- Bumble Bee breaths: sit comfortably with your legs crossed, breathe in through your nose, put your fingers in your ears, and hum out your exhalation. Try with your eyes closed to make it more peaceful.
- Tumble Dryer: Sit in a cross legged position, and point your index fingers towards each other, positioning them so your left finger is pointing to the right and your right finger is pointing to the left overlapping a bit in front of your mouth. Spin your fingers around each other as you exhale a long, slow breath
- Tongue Tube/Tago Breathing: sit comfortably with a long spine. Curl the edges of your tongue together like a taco and bring it between your lips. Not everyone can do this genetically, so if you're having trouble, just make a round straw with your lips. Take a deep inhale through your tongue taco or straw, and then exhale slowly.
- Deep Belly Breathing: The fullest inhales come from the depth of our bellies. Bringing awareness to the rise and fall of our bellies can bring us a sense of calmness and can slow our breath down in times of stress. Sitting comfortably, place one hand on your belly and one hand on your heart. On the inhale breathe from the very bottom of your belly and feel how your belly rises. On the exhale, bring attention to the feeling of release as your belly falls. Repeat several times.
- Hot Air Balloon Practice: Sitting in a comfortable cross-legged position, start by cupping your hands round your mouth. Take a deep breath in through your nose and slowly start to blow out through your mouth, growing your hands outwards in time with your exhale as if you are blowing up an enormous hot air balloon.

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ACTIVITY 2: NATURE YOGA POSES

Practicing the following foundational yoga poses. Work on each pose for 3-5 minutes

- Be a tree (tree pose) - Stand on one leg. Bend your other knee and place your foot on your inner thigh. Bring your arms up to your chest or hold them above your head. Balance on each leg for 15 seconds, and try closing your eyes for an added balance challenge
- Be a frog (squat pose) - Come down to a squat with your knees apart and your bent elbows resting between your knees, bring your hands together at your chest, and press your elbows into your inner knee to feel a stretch.
- Be a seed (child's pose) - Begin kneeling on your knees, then sit back on your heels and bring your forehead down to rest on the floor. Put your hands under your forehead, or bring them around to rest by your legs
- Be a snake (cobra pose) - Starting on your knees, walk your arms out until your chest and the front side of your legs are resting on the floor. Then keeping your legs pressed to the floor, walk your arms back to raise up your torso so your back is arched and your chest is lifted into the air with your chin tilted back. Hold this for 15-30 seconds
- Be a dog (downward dog pose) - Start on all fours. Spread your fingers and press your palms flat into the floor. Lift your butt into the air and straighten your legs to make an upside down 'V' shape with your body. Try to lengthen your spine by bending your knees a little and relax your head and neck so you are looking between your legs.
- Be a cat/cow (Cat Cow Pose) - Start on your hands and knees, tuck your chin into your chest and round your back (cat). Then look up, open your chest, and arch your back (cow). Repeat this a few times over.
- Be a mountain (mountain pose) - Stand with your arms relaxed at your sides with your palms faced outward in a gesture of openness. Stand tall, like a balloon is lifting you up.
- Be a bridge over a river (bridge pose) - Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. Rest your arms down alongside your body, tuck your chin into your chest, and lift up your hips to create a bridge.