

Regulation Strategies Reference Sheet

Teach students to respond to their own dysregulation while they are calm and focused. Support that learning by leading the entire class in the exercises, cueing students to use the techniques, and allowing them to use them as needed during class.

Breathing Techniques

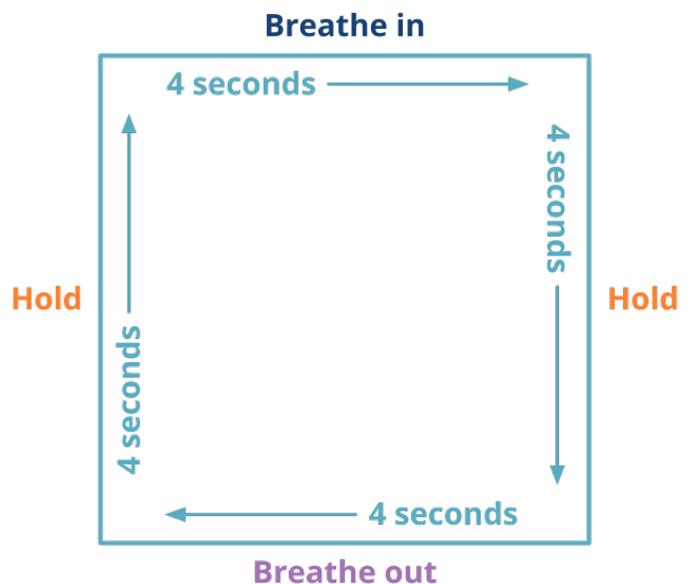
Using any of the common breathing techniques is an effective way to help a student calm their dysregulated system. When stressed or anxious, we take shallow breaths into our chests. We can calm our body and mind by breathing slowly into the belly giving the oxygen time to reach the heart and lower brain.

To practice mindful breathing, we count as we inhale and exhale. If students feel comfortable, have them close their eyes. Return to this simple breathing technique throughout the school day to help with transitions, before test preparation or a difficult academic lesson, or during difficult situations.

There are many different ways to present slow, calm breathing such as elephant breathing, bunny breathing and bumble bee breathing. Check your school's video and social emotional learning resources to see if they include specific breathing techniques. Here are three that are widely used.

Square Breathing

- **Content:** Legg, Timothy J., Ph.D. & Stinson, Adrienne. (2018, June 1). What is box breathing? Medical News Today. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321805>
- **Video example:** Kids Meditation. (2018, September 17). Square Breathing (Focus & Calm). <https://youtu.be/YFdZXwE6fRE>
- **Visual adapted from:** <https://mikenseer.medium.com/the-life-hack-you-can-take-anywhere-breathing-20f0627d0f73>



Funding Disclaimer

This project was supported by Cooperative Agreement No. 2019-YS-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Five Finger Breathing

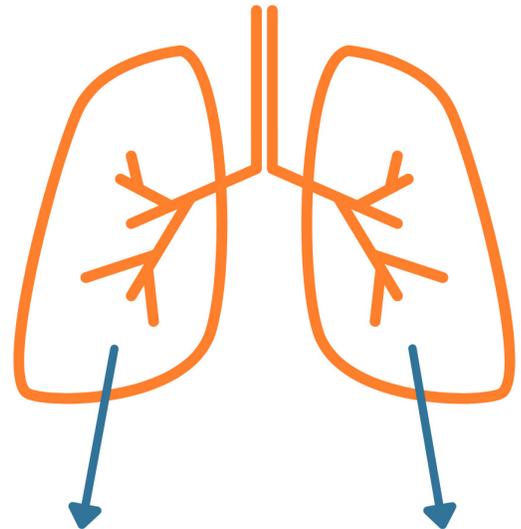
1. Take the forefinger of your right hand.
2. Trace slowly around the edges of your left hand.
3. When your finger moves to the tip of a finger, breathe in.
4. When your finger moves toward the palm, breathe out.

- **Content:** Childhood 101. Take 5 Breathing Exercise for Kids. <https://childhood101.com/take-5-breathing-exercise/>
- **Video example:** Go with Yoyo. (2020, May 19). Five Finger Breathing: Surf the Waves to Calm Down. <https://youtu.be/QObXB8Kd5Pw>
- **Visual adapted from:** https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fpbs.twimg.com%2Fmedia%2FEUw01dmXsAEdq_.jpg&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter



Diaphragm Breathing

- **Content:** Cleveland Clinic. Diaphragmatic Breathing. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9445-diaphragmatic-breathing#:~:text=Diaphragmatic%20breathing%20technique&text=Place%20one%20hand%20on%20your,remain%20as%20still%20as%20possible>
- **Video:** Fablefy -The Whole Child. (2018, September 18). Diaphragm breathing for High Schools and Adults – Breathing Exercise. https://youtu.be/h5s5iT_FzZQ (Note: for upper high school use the middle part of the video and not the beginning or end).



Sensory & Mindfulness Activities

Many schools are using mindfulness curriculum and strategies. Check your district's resources to ensure you are in line with what is already being done. Here are several quick exercises and tools that are effective in calming dysregulation.

Grounding Exercise

A method for increasing awareness of surroundings and decreasing dissociation from the present situation.

Look around and name:

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

- **Content:** Schuldt, Woody, LMHC. (2021). Grounding Techniques. Therapist Aid. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-article/grounding-techniques-article>

Sensory Tools

Use the sensory tool of choice that meets the need of the student's regulatory system helping to calm the lower brain.

- Rocking chair
- Coloring/doodling
- Journaling
- Noise cancellation headphones
- Stress balances

- Small puzzles
- Gum
- Hard candy
- Calming corner/safe place

- **Content:** Daniel, Sara. (n.d.) Module #3: Classroom Sensory Strategies. Wisconsin DPI Trauma Sensitive Schools Online Professional Development. https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/TSSNeuroscience_ClassroomSensoryStrategy.pdf

Cross-Lateral Exercises

Cross-lateral movements are those in which arms and legs cross over from one side of the body to the other. Both sides are forced to communicate when arms and legs crossover. This “unsticks” the brain and energizes learning.

Knee Tap

Stand with arms at sides. Touch your right hand to your left knee. Stand with arms at sides and touch left hand to right knee.

Elbow Tap

Stand with arms at sides. Bend and touch right elbow to left knee as you raise your leg. Stand and then touch your left elbow to your right knee.

Windmills

Feet spread apart and arms extended. Bend over at your waist and tap your right hand to your left foot. Back up and then bend and tap your left hand to your right foot

Backwards

Bend your left knee to put your foot behind your right leg. Reach back around with your right hand to touch your left foot. Reverse, putting your right foot behind your left leg. Touch it with your left hand.

Sensory & Mindfulness Activities

Grounding Exercise

A method for increasing awareness of surroundings and decreasing dissociation from the present situation.

Look around you. Identify and name

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you feel
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell

- 1 thing you taste

Finger Holds

A cross lateral exercise that assists with focus and calming. Hold each finger for 2-5 mins.

Breathe in deeply; recognize the strong feelings/emotions you hold inside. Breathe out slowly and let go. Imagine the feelings draining out your finger. Breathe strength and breathe out slowly.

- Index—Fear and Panic
- Thumb—Grief and Sadness
- Middle Finger—Anger
- Ring Finger—Anxiety
- Small Finger—Lack of Respect for Self

Sensory Tools

Use the sensory tool of choice that meets the need of the student’s regulatory system.

- Rocking chair
- Coloring/doodling
- Journaling
- Noise cancellation headphones
- Stress balances
- Small puzzles
- Gum
- Hard candy
- Calming corner/safe place