

Mindfulness Activities with Children (and Adults)

The following activities are from *Growing Mindful Cards*
by Mitch Abblett and Chris Willard:

Square Breathing

Breathe in for count of 4. Hold for count of 4.

Breathe out for count of 4. Hold for count of 4.

Repeat.

You can trace a square while you are doing this, each count of 4 is one side of the square.

5 Fingered Breathing

Hold up one hand, all fingers extended.

With other hand, start to trace the outside of your fingers slowly.

First up the outside of your thumb, breathing in, saying 1

Then trace down the inside of your thumb, breathing out, saying 2, and continue all around your fingers, breathing in as you trace up and breathing out as you trace down.

Notice how your body and mind feels.

You can do this quietly and no one has to know you are doing it.

Samurai's Eyes

Study the scene around you and try to memorize what everything looks like. Close your eyes and visualize/see in your mind the same scene. Try to see everything there. Open your eyes and see how close you were to remembering everything there.

Silent Sighs

Inhale deeply into your belly.

On the outbreath, sigh as quietly and slowly as possible until all the air is released.

Repeat as needed.

7/11 Breath

Breathe in for a count of 7 (using your fingers)

Breathe out for a count of 11 (again using your fingers)

Repeat

Rainbow Connection

Gaze around the room...

Can you spot every color in the rainbow?

Sounds Around

Notice 5 sounds around you right now.

Count them on your fingers.

How many sounds can you hear in 30 seconds?

Moving Stillness

Take a minute and try to move every muscle in every part of your body at once while holding just one finger perfectly still.

Zoom Wide

Focus on just one object in your surroundings.

Then expand your field of vision to take in everything.

Shift between the 2 every 3 breaths for one minute.

The Tree

Imagine a huge tree, you may have seen it or just imagine it.

Stand still with the confidence of that huge tree.

Say to yourself as you breathe,

Breathing in I see myself as the tree.

Breathing out I feel confident and strong...

Repeat for 5 breaths.

(If you feel really confident, try standing on one leg or with eyes closed.)

The following activities are from *KidsRelaxation.com*:

Rocket Breath

You can stand or sit with a straight back. Hold your hands gently together in front of your chest, getting ready for the take off. As you count down from five to one, press your hands together and inhale during the count-down. When you get to one, then say "blast off!" and give a big exhale, moving hands in an upward "take off" motion, making a whoosing sound until arms are straight up. When hands and arms reach straight up, she can separate hands allowing them to circle back around to starting position. (If you feel really confident, try standing on one leg or with eyes closed.)

Sea Turtle

“Pull your energy into your shell and go with the flow”. That’s it for the one-minute sea turtle relaxation. Pretend you are a sea turtle and practice a fun, easy way to relax in the moment.

Pull your energy back into your shell with a few deep breaths. If appropriate, you can add a self hug “shell” to provide the kinesthetic, tactile feedback as well. Imagine that all of your energy is coming right back to you and that you are pulling it inside your shell to focus and relax.

Next, just like sea turtles effortlessly float in the ocean, you are going to “go with the flow”. Relax your body, let all of your muscles melt like you are floating in the ocean. Now we are going to “go with the flow.” Make whatever is happening in the moment, “Okay by me.” Saying “okay” is just noticing, it doesn’t mean that you like what is happening, you are just allowing it to be okay right now. Then, watch and flow, watch and flow. Allow yourself to float peacefully in the moment.

For quick reminders, after you have practiced for a while, you can simply practice by saying “Sea Turtle” as the signal to begin. That signal can be the reminder to “pull your energy into your shell and go with the flow.”

Heart Wash

(Play the sound of a gentle running brook in the background for added effect.)

Close your eyes, allow your attention to flow like a river down to your heart space. Breathe slowly in, counting one... two... three. Hold your breath and count to 3. Now slowly let the breath out, counting to 3 as you exhale. Now repeat. Breathe in, one... two... three. Hold your breath one... two... three. Breathe out, one... two... three. Now imagine that this river is flowing through your heart space. It washes away stuck feelings (pause), tightness (pause), yucky thoughts (pause), old ideas (pause), tension (pause). It is flowing calm and smooth, like melting ice flowing like a river out of the mountains in the spring. Melting away every little bit of tension there. Ahhhh, good. Allow this river to gently flow. As it flows, hear the soft bubbling of running water. It feels so good. You are feeling so relaxed and your heart area feels open and calm. Breathe in. (Pause). Breathe out. (Pause).

Icicle/Puddle Game

Pretend that you are frozen solid like an icicle. Stand very tall, straight, stiff, frozen, making your body into an icicle. So stiff that if someone gently pushed you, you would be stiff and solid. Feel what that is like for a few breaths.

Now, ready? Melt your icicle self into a puddle! How does a puddle feel? How does a puddle look? Maybe it hangs over at the waist with arms flopping by the sides? Show how puddle-like you can be!

Now you can play the game. When you hear “icicle”, stiffen every muscle and hold them very tight and be your icicle self. Then when you hear “puddle”, melt into a floppy puddle.

Repeat several times and notice what it feels like to be puddly and icily.