

SHORT, DEEP BREATHING EXERCISES TO INCREASE FOCUS

Students and educators can both benefit from knowing how to do deep breathing exercises, to calm themselves and refocus. Educators can practice these exercises during team meetings before teaching them to their students, and should encourage breaks throughout the day to practice them.

4-7-8 Breathing

- Breathe in through your nose while counting silently to 4
- Hold your breath while silently counting to 7
- Breathe out fully through your mouth while counting silently to 8
- Repeat this cycle five times, focusing on inhaling deeply while extending your stomach and exhaling to fully empty your lungs
- Note: Those who find it difficult to hold their breath for extended periods may want to count more quickly; the goal is to focus on comfortably slowing breathing down

5-Finger Breathing

- Hold your left hand up and spread your fingers out
- Place the pointer finger on your right hand at the base of your left thumb
- Breathe into your belly as you move your pointer finger to the top of your thumb
- Breathe out fully as you move your pointer finger down the other side of your thumb
- Continue to move your right pointer finger up and down all five fingers on the left hand, breathing in as your finger goes up and breathing out as your finger moves down

Mantra Breathing

- Choose a simple statement such as, “I am at peace” or “I am present now”
- Inhale deeply into your belly as you silently say the first two words
- Exhale fully as you silently say the second two words
- Repeat three to five times

Hot Cocoa Breathing—better for preschool and elementary students

- Make your right hand into a fist (your cup of cocoa) and place it on your left hand that is flattened out like a saucer
- Hold your hands under your nose and take a deep breath into your belly as if you are trying to smell your cocoa
- Breathe out fully through your mouth as if you are trying to cool down your cocoa
- Repeat five times

“Let go” Breathing—better for ’tweens and teens

- Think about something that is causing fear, sadness, or anger
- Breathe into your belly deeply as you think about what concerns you
- Breathe out fully as you silently say “let go” and imagine releasing your negative emotions
- Repeat five times