

# Mindfulness for Primary Schools

Young One Yoga

# The Benefits Of Mindfulness

- Increased focus, attention, self-control, classroom participation, compassion
- Improved academic performance, ability to resolve conflict, overall well-being
- Decreased levels of stress, depression, anxiety, disruptive behavior

Mindfulness based interventions empower children to develop self management strategies to regulate their behaviour. From improving concentration to self-esteem, practicing mindfulness consistently is one of the best tools we can give young people to help them navigate through life.

*We can be mindful in everything that we do... reading, writing, walking, breathing. All we need to do is turn our attention to the one thing that we are doing and focus on how it feels.*

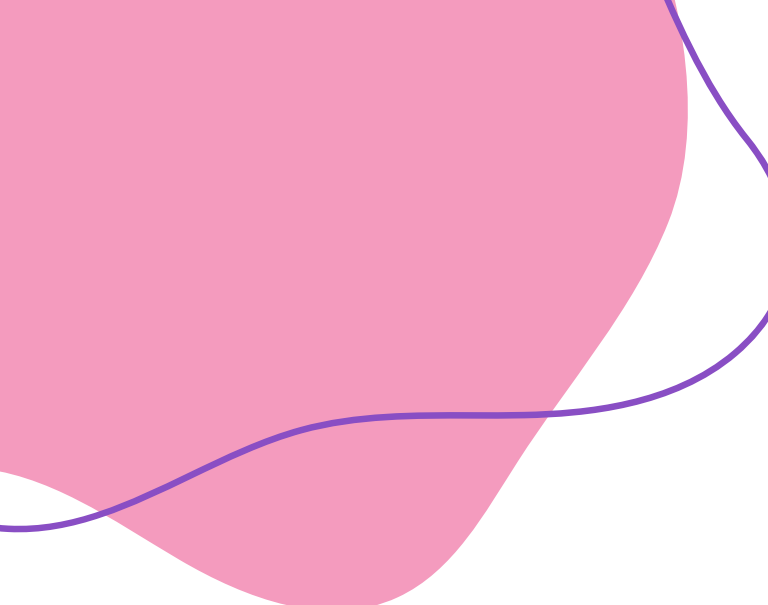
# The breath!

*The breath is our super tool*


It's the easier and simplest way to be mindful as it's something we do all of the time.

By bringing attention to the breath it helps us to be in the present moment.

We just need to be reminded of it!



# Breathing Exercises



## 10 Breaths

My mum always used to say count to 10 to calm down in a situation.

Well, this is exactly that.

Take 10 deep breaths to calm, refocus and relax.

Breathing in and out is 1 full breath.

Use your fingers & thumbs to count 10 full breaths. Finish by bring two open hands together

## 10 Breaths

You can also use the 10 breaths exercise in a positive way. If we're taking 10 breaths while savouring a positive experience on a regular basis, we're slowly rewiring our brains

We can encourage children to take ten mindful breaths whenever they encounter something beautiful. This way, "patterns of happiness become habitual and deeply nourishing."

## Take 5

Using two of the senses - touch and sight - as well as breathing, this exercise helps to bring attention back to the present moment.

Spreading one hand wide, use the other hand to trace up and down the fingers at the same time as incorporating the breath.

As you trace up - breathe in

As you trace down - breathe out.

Encourage children to focus on their hands to stop distractions from around the room.

## Box Breathing

Breathe in as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

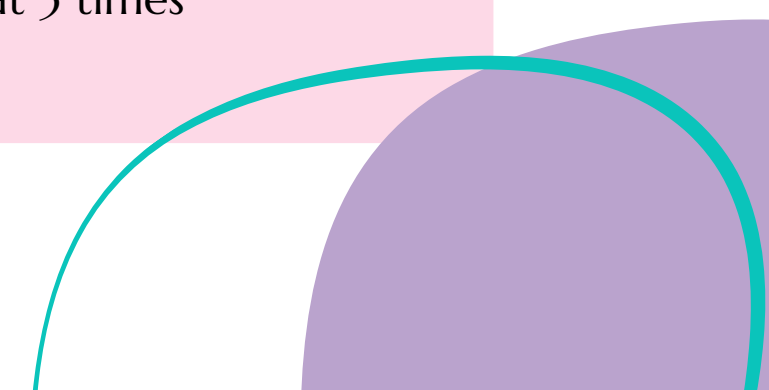
Hold as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

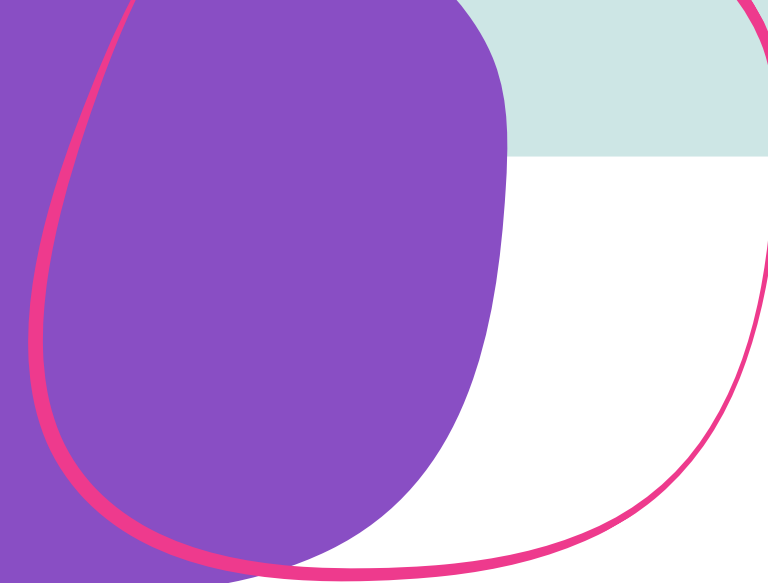
Breathe out as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

Hold as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

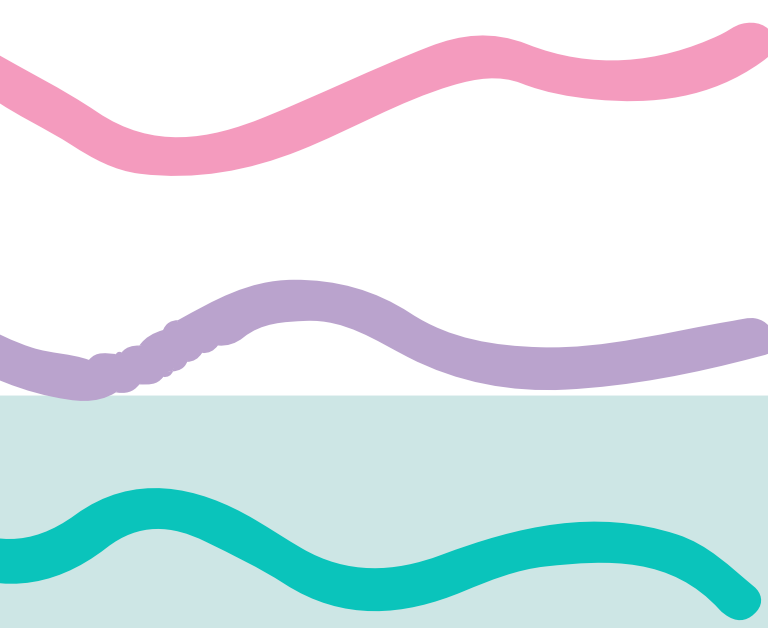
Keep your counting even and trace your finger along the 4 edges of a box of tissues or a dice if that helps you to keep focus

Repeat 3 times





# Brain Breaks



## Bell Listening Exercise

Use a bell, chimes, triangle or an app (MINDFULNESS BELL APP)

Have everyone sit still, close their eyes and listen to the vibration of the sound

Tell them to raise their hand when the ringing stops/they don't hear the sound anymore.

Repeat 3- 5 times.

On the last time once the ringing stops, ask them to pay attention to any other sounds they can hear for about a minute.

This is a simple but powerful exercise to shift their attention to the present moment and surroundings.

## Moving With Music

This playful approach is important to develop a sense of light-heartedness with mindfulness and is super important for our wellbeing.

Play some music and invite them to move in a way that matches the music. This could be while staying in their chairs or asking them to move around the room.

Encourage them to dance or stretch or walk, shake, or play with movement in their wrists, hands, or fingers. And welcome them to explore big or small movements.

When the music ends, ask your students to be still for a couple of breaths and invite them to notice how they feel after moving to the music

## Shake & Release

A fun and excellent brain break to reset the children's minds and get fresh blood pumping around the body. Guide the children to shake or wiggle each part of their body in turn, starting from their toes all the way up to their heads.

This can be done in a number of ways - controlled big wiggles & shakes or, slow mindful movements. Be sure to include each tiny part of the body as well to get the children thinking how to move that area - for example: ears, eyebrows, tummy, elbows, etc.

# The Senses

The senses are a gateway to the present moment. The following technique invites students to connect with their senses by looking, feeling, listening, smelling, and tasting. It's an extremely useful tool when it comes to helping both adults and children find calm in times of stress.

Invite your students to name:

5 things they can see

4 things they can touch

3 things they can hear

2 things they can smell

1 thing they can taste

Take a deep breath out and notice how they are feeling now.

# Positivity

## Affirmations

You may not think that daily mantras can make much of a difference but using positive affirmations for children can be life-changing!

You can help improve emotional wellbeing by teaching children to have a positive mindset and attitude by using positive thinking quotes.

Having affirmations around the classroom, or an affirmation jar that someone can pick an "Affirmation of the day" from daily

## Let It Go Box

Find a box, something small like a shoe box or a chocolate box. Write down what's worrying you on a piece of paper and place it in the box.

Tell yourself that you don't need to think about the worry at the moment and you can let it go and leave it in the box for now. You can do this as many times as you like.

Remember to keep the box somewhere private.

## Nature

Spend 5 or 10 minutes every day to connect with nature.

Look out of the window and watch the clouds. Look at photos on the beach or in the countryside. Watch a video of the sea or a walk through a forest. Listen to birds singing or dogs barking nearby. Imagine being outdoors somewhere calm and peaceful by a waterfall or on a mountain path.

## Kindess Jar

A kindness jar is a lovely thing to have in class.

Let the children know that if someone has been kind to them, helpful, funny, or anything nice, then they can write it down including the child's name and pop it in the Kindess Jar.

At different points throughout the day a note can be pulled out of the kindness jar and read aloud to help promote positivity and good feeling within the class.



# Gratitude



Teaching children an attitude of gratitude, in a nutshell, is helping them look at different situations from a positive point of view instead of a negative one.

**Gratitude is believed to be one of the healthiest emotions that humans can practice.**

Gratitude goes much deeper than just saying please and thank you, it's a mindset, one that you can develop and cultivate.

- End each day writing down or saying out loud something that we are grateful for or something good that happened today
- Gratitude Jar - Writing down what they are grateful for and add it to a jar so that take ones out when they feel sad or down to cheer them up
- Thank You Notes - It can be nice to get the children into writing thank you notes if someone has helped them or been kind etc. You can have them write a thank you note to give to the child or have an area on the wall for all the thank you notes to be put up



# Calm Corner/ Zen Den

Having a space where a child can go whenever they notice feelings, emotions, or being overwhelmed, can be a really good way to encourage children to learn how to self regulate.

You may be able to have a corner in the classroom, or have a small Tee-Pee with a calming toolkit, with an array of items for their senses, to help calm and refocus.

## Calm Corner / Zen Den Ideas

● GYM/FITNESS BALL - FOR STUDENTS TO SIT ON AND GROUND THEMSELVES.

● SPIKEY BALLS - GREAT TO HOLD IN THEIR HANDS OR ROLL THEIR FEET ON.

● STRESS BALL - AGAIN TO USE IN THEIR HANDS TO HELP RELEASE FRUSTRATIONS, ANGER ETC.

● FIGURE OF 8 - WHETHER ITS A DRAWING OF A FIGURE OF 8 THAT THEY CAN TRACE WITH THEIR FINGER, OR A TRACK THAT THEY CAN PUSH SOMETHING AROUND ON, OR PUT THEIR FEET ON HELPS TO CALM WITH REPETITION.

● SOFT BLANKET OR PILLOW - FURRY OR ANOTHER TEXTURE CAN BE REALLY NICE FOR USE TO SIT OR CUDDLE.

● MEDITATION JAR - A JAR OF WATER/GLUE/GLITTER THAT ACTS LIKE A SNOW GLOBE. HELPS TO VISUALLY UNDERSTAND BUSY THOUGHTS IN THE MIND AS WELL AS BEING A SIGHT STIMULANT TO HELP CALM.

● PRINT OUTS OF SIMPLE BREATHING EXERCISES

● BUBBLES - A SMALL POT OF BUBBLES, PROMOTES BREATHING AND A VISUAL TO CALM.

● HOBERMAN SPHERE - USED TO SIMULATE BREATHING BUT ALSO GOOD FOR USING THE CHILD TO EXPERIMENT AND PLAY.

● MANDALA - MINDFUL DRAWING IS A NICE EXERCISE TO HELP CALM AND REFOCUS.



# Resources

## BOOKS:

The Colour Monster  
Super Duper You  
The Lion Inside  
Ruby's Worry  
The Same But Different Too  
Listening With My Heart  
Yogi Superhero

## YOGA CARDS:

Yoga Pretzels  
The Kids Yoga Deck  
IMYOGI Yoga Cards For Kids - inclusive cards for ethnicity and disability  
Mindful Games Activity Cards



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Young One  
Yoga



Young One  
Yoga



IAM  
STRONG



Young One Yoga



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IAM  
HAPPY

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