


## Breathe In, Breathe Out

 This easy exercise will help your class focus and find their balance. You can use it when children need to calm down or you need to quickly transition them. Have students try to match your breathing pace as you quickly inhale and then slowly exhale.

### Action

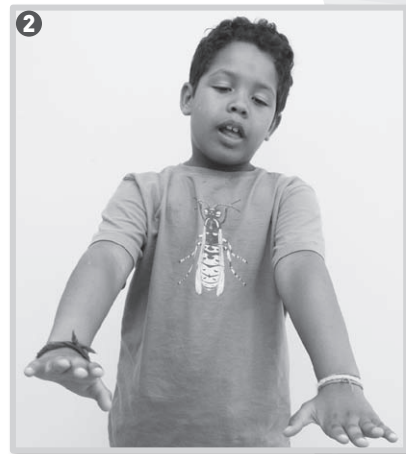
1. Raise your arms to chest level. Breathe in deeply through your nose. Pull your hands toward your chest, palms facing up.
2. Breathe out as slowly as you can through your mouth. Slowly push your hands down the front of your body until all the air has gone out.
3. Repeat two times.




### Expression

As students focus on breathing, have them imagine that they are waking up in a beautiful place, such as the top of a mountain, a cliff overlooking the sea, or a dense forest.

**W**hen we inhale, the brain releases stimulating alpha neurons. When we exhale, calming beta neurons are released. By doing both, we strike the balance between relaxed and alert states.



## Belly Breathing

-  Focus on belly breathing to help students remain calm during times that they find stressful, such as class presentations or test taking.

### Action

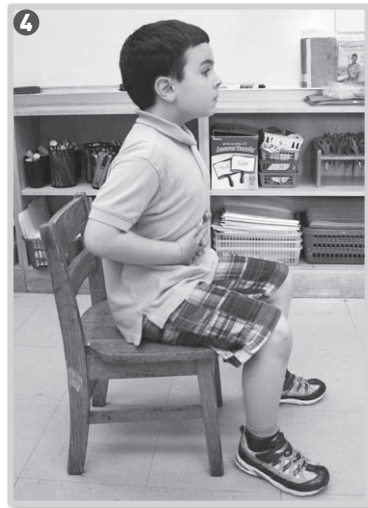
1. Put both hands on your belly.
2. Close your eyes. Think only about your breathing. Concentrate!
3. Feel your belly move toward your hands as you take a breath in, or inhale.
4. Feel your belly move away from your hands as you breathe out, or exhale.
5. Repeat three times.

### Expression


Have students imagine a long straw with a balloon attached at the bottom. The straw begins at their nose and ends just below their belly button. Read aloud:

*Every time you breathe into your straw, the air travels down the straw to fill the balloon. Feel the balloon get full.*

**N**ot everyone breathes in the same way. Some children are chest breathers rather than belly breathers. They may find that their bellies and hands move a little differently as they inhale and as they exhale. Recognize students' individual experiences, while exposing them to beneficial belly breaths.



## 3-D Breathing

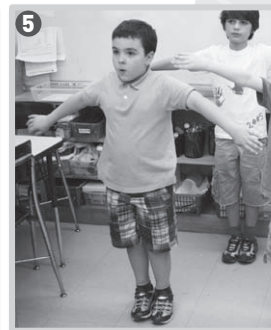
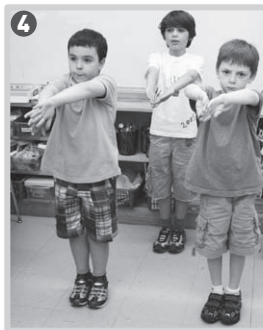
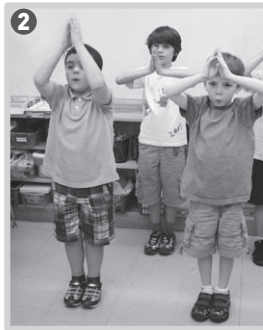
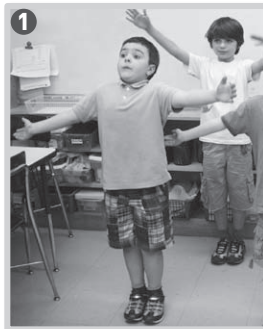
 This exercise is an excellent way to raise students' spatial awareness and improve their self-control. Emphasize inhaling when you want to wake the class up and exhaling when you want to calm them down.

### Action


1. Stand with your feet and legs together. Inhale as you reach your arms out wide to both sides and then up above your head. Keep stretching until your palms touch over your head.
2. Exhale as you lower your hands. Keep your palms together and gently drop them straight down until they reach your belly button.
3. Inhale as you point your hands straight ahead. Keep your palms together and stretch your arms out in front of your body.
4. Exhale as you rotate your arms. Turn your palms outward and spread your arms to the side as if you are swimming breaststroke.
5. Inhale as you return your arms to your sides.
6. Exhale as you stand still.
7. Repeat twice.

### Expression

Have students notice what happens to the shape of their bodies when they inhale and exhale.



## Invisible Kids

 Try this exercise to engage students in the challenge of holding steady. Use it when you need to have students remain quietly in one place for a long stretch or anytime you want the whole class paying attention to you!

### Action

1. Choose a good standing or seated position.
2. Be as still and quiet as possible, noticing the sights, sounds, and smells around you. Keep breathing and noticing how your body feels.

### Expression

- While students are holding still, encourage them to pay attention to their bodies. Read aloud the following: *Notice your heart beating. Feel your eyelids blinking. Feel your breath moving through your ribcage, your belly, and your back. Hold your eyes steady. How much of the room can you still see without moving your eyes? Listen. Think about what you can hear.*
- Tell students that although legends say that ninja had the ability to disappear, this is likely an exaggeration of their highly developed stealth and stillness skills, which they learned from the animal kingdom. Read aloud the following: *Imagine yourself as a ninja. Pretend that you are invisible. Feel the spell that you create through your absolute stillness. You've got the power of ninja (or Dumbledore, Merlin, or Gandalf).*
- Have students choose to be an animal that keeps still, such as a chameleon, snow rabbit, or stick bug.

### Variations

- Have students move from one place to another, imagining that they are silently blending in the whole time.
- Set a timer. Have students count the noises they can hear. Have a contest to see who can take the fewest breaths before the timer goes off.
- Play Surprise Attack. Designate a set of sound warnings. When students hear the warning, they become invisible until the signal comes to release the spell. You can use a red light and green light signal or a bell, for example.
- Have children imagine themselves growing and shrinking beyond their body's walls. Students who enjoy performing and have stage presence will be motivated to work on this.



**S**low and even breathing through the nose will enhance this exercise. Doing a longer exhale promotes relaxation and focus.