

Balloon Breathing Exercise (Belly Breathing)

BALLOON BREATHING

Step 1: Inhale Fully

Place your hands on your belly. Breath in slowly through your nose to fill your lungs all the way to the top, as you feel your belly, abdomen and chest expanding out like a big balloon...



Step 2: Exhale Fully

Now open your mouth and slowly blow **all** of the air back out of your lungs, letting your belly sink down flat, as if deflating that imaginary balloon. Repeat, but the next time close your mouth and practice breathing in, and out, through your nose, as you feel your belly expanding and shrinking.



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Purpose:

Students practice deep breathing techniques as part of stress reduction

Content:

Teacher/facilitator introduces and demonstrates the concept of deep breathing as a stress reduction strategy that can be used in the present moment as well as an

excellent skill to master to more effectively cope with future stressors.

Teacher/facilitator has all students stand or seated in a chair.

Provide students with the following directions:

1. Stand straight up with feet shoulder-width apart
2. Arms and hands are relaxed downward
3. Body is relaxed
4. Eyes closed
5. Focus on lower abdomen (belly) and imagine a small balloon in that space
6. Breathe in slowly and deeply through nostrils, imagining the balloon inflating (getting bigger/larger/growing) slowly, hold a few seconds
7. Slowly exhale through the mouth, imagining the balloon gently deflating (getting smaller, shrinking); blow out of the mouth as if blowing out a candle
8. Tip: Place a hand over the lower abdomen to feel it go up and down, and make sure you're not breathing with the chest
9. Repeat at least 10 times

Ask students how different their bodies feel after the exercise. (Are they more relaxed/calm? Do they feel lighter? Great? Tired?)

Extension:

Practice several times with the class until they achieve a comfortable competence with deep breathing. Encourage students to practice on their own as well (e.g. while they are waiting for something, before going out to the store, or at bedtime, etc.). Have students teach the deep breathing technique to a friend or family member. Once students develop this habit, they will automatically go into deep breathing mode and relaxation.