

HIGH SCHOOL

RELAXATION SKILLS

Skill Sheet for Educators

High schoolers manage a lot. Many days they juggle schoolwork, extracurricular activities, jobs, and relationships with friends and family. They also grapple with larger issues like forming their identity, gaining independence, and preparing for the future.

In this video, teens learn that the stress, anxiety and frustration that often come with these experiences produce uncomfortable physical sensations due to our fight, flight, or freeze response. Effective relaxation skills, like paced belly breathing, help to calm the body and turn down the intensity of these unpleasant feelings.

Summary of the **KEY SKILLS** from the video.

- Paced belly breathing is breathing slowly and deeply at a steady pace. By slowing their inhales and extending their exhales, your students can use their breath to harness control of their emotions.
- Paced belly breathing balances out the carbon dioxide and oxygen in students' bodies, cutting off their fight, flight, or freeze response. It returns their mind and body to a calmer state.

Practice skills

- When you notice that a student is feeling anxious, frustrated, or worried, pull them aside and encourage them to stop what they are doing and take a few minutes to practice taking paced belly breaths.
- Encourage your students to practice belly breathing when they are calm. They will be more prepared to use the skill in the moment they need it if they have practiced it beforehand.
- Paced belly breathing for relaxation is different than the breathing teens do without thinking about it. If your students say, "I've tried that," encourage them to give it another try. Providing some information about why belly breathing helps may increase their willingness to try.

Start with this →

- Post the paced belly breathing instructions in your classroom as a reminder to students for how to calm down from difficult emotions.
- Practice as a class. Using a few minutes of class time for your students to relax their bodies and calm their minds may ultimately save you time. Students will be better prepared for learning when their emotions are calm and their bodies are relaxed.

On the next page there is an activity that you can share with your students or post in your classroom to reinforce and practice paced belly breathing.

Activity

Practicing these skills helps you to increase awareness of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to improve your mental health and wellness.

Paced Belly Breathing

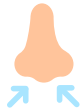
Breathing deeply into your belly helps to tell your body that you are safe and calm. Follow the instructions below and practice paced belly breathing when you are feeling calm and when you are feeling stressed or anxious.



- 1 Sit comfortably in your chair or on the floor either cross-legged or on your shins.



- 2 Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest.



- 3 Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds and feel your belly expand.



- 4 Slowly breathe out for 5 seconds through your mouth, letting the air gently leave your body.



- 5 Repeat 3-5 times, or for as long as you want.

Keep a log to plan when you will use relaxation skills.
Plan self-care activities, too.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

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