

Relaxation Skills

Stress and anxiety are connected to physical sensations in our bodies. The relaxation skill of paced belly breathing helps us turn down these unpleasant physical sensations, which helps us to feel calm and in control.

For example, Molly the hedgehog was feeling nervous during her dance competition. She felt many unpleasant physical sensations in her body. Thanks to her friend Hanna the turtle, Molly used paced belly breathing to calm her body and turn down her nervousness so she could complete the competition.

Below is a summary of paced belly breathing, one of the key relaxation skills in the video:

- Belly breathing is breathing slowly and deeply at a steady pace. By slowing their inhaleds and extending their exhaleds, your child can use their breath to harness their emotions.
- Belly breathing balances out the carbon dioxide and oxygen in kids' bodies, cutting off their fight, flight, or freeze response. It returns their mind and body to a calmer state.

Practice Skills:

- Model and practice relaxation strategies with your child proactively. For example:
 - *"I'm feeling nervous right now, so I am going to take five belly breaths to calm down. Take five belly breaths with me."*
- Use specific positive feedback frequently, immediately, and consistently when your child utilizes paced belly breathing. For example:
 - *"Nice job taking belly breaths before reading in front of the class!"*
 - *"_____, I noticed you used paced belly breathing when you were starting to feel angry. Great choice!"*

Start with this →

- Use paced belly breathing to help ground yourself and your child after exciting activities like playtime or sports or for transitions between activities at home.
- You can also practice and model this skill for your child as a way to navigate challenging emotions like feeling scared or angry.

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

Paced Belly Breathing

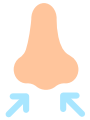
Breathing deeply into your belly helps to tell your body that you are safe and calm. Follow the instructions below and practice paced belly breathing when you are feeling calm and when you are feeling stressed or anxious.



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.

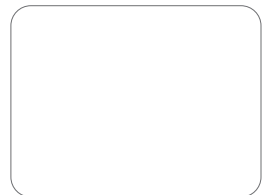


4 Slowly breathe out for 5 seconds through your mouth, letting the air gently leave your body.



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

When can you practice paced belly breathing?



Draw your own