

# CALMING STRATEGIES

KIDS



## Breathing exercises

1. Ask your child to pretend to smell a flower / pretend to blow a candle
2. Blow soap bubbles
3. Blow a pinwheel
4. Place pieces of cotton on a flat surface and blow on them to move them along.
5. Blow a candle
6. Deep breathing while Mum/Dad counts to 10

## Other breathing exercises:

7. Lazy 8 Breathing exercise
8. Yoga breathing techniques
9. Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic breathing)
10. Alternate nostril breathing  
Place your thumb on your right nostril and your middle and index on your left nostril. Hold your right nostril closed with your thumb and breathe in slowly through the left one. Breathe out through the right nostril while closing the left one. Hold your breath a couple of seconds and breathe in through your right nostril, keeping the left one closed. Continue alternating sides.

## Mindfulness

11. Body Scan Meditation – this meditation technique involves systematically and intentionally moving our attention through our body, attending to the various sensations in the different regions.
12. Meditation

### 13. Yoga

#### Muscle Relaxation techniques

##### 14. Progressive muscle relaxation exercises.

The premise of this relaxation method is that physical relaxation will lead to a feeling of calmness.

In progressive muscle relaxation, you systematically proceed to tense and then relax muscle groups, following a certain order.

##### 15. Squeeze a stress relief ball with your hand / release it

This follows the same principle as the previous technique. But it may be easier to teach a kid to start with just squeezing a ball.

##### 16. Hug tight a soft toy

One more tensing-relaxing exercise. You can also teach your kids how to “breathe in / hug tight / breathe out / relax”, repeating this cycle several times till they start feeling calm

#### Other Relaxation techniques

##### 17. Massage

Medical research has shown that the benefits of massage include pain relief, reduced anxiety, and depression, and temporarily reduced blood pressure, heart rate, and state of anxiety. But even if you don't know anything about massage, lots of kids find it really soothing to have a soft foot, hand, back or head massage.

##### 18. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

This is a very simple and extremely effective grounding exercise. It will distract your child from the anxiety trigger, help focus on the present moment and relax.

Ask your child:

Name 5 things you can SEE in the room

Name 4 things you can FEEL

Name 3 things you can HEAR

Name 2 things you can SMELL right now

Name 1 thing you can TASTE

#### Calming down through intense activity

Use physical activity to burn out or as a distraction technique

##### 19. Bounce-on ball

##### 20. Jump / Skip jumping

##### 21. Go for a run / Get your child to run around a piece of furniture if you can't go out

##### 22. Go bike riding

##### 23. Dance like there's no tomorrow!

#### Using deep pressure as a calming tool

Many kids find deep pressure touch very calming. These are some examples of items that provide deep pressure input

##### 24. Weighted blankets

##### 25. Weighted vests

- 26. A weighted stuffed puppy
- 27. A body sock
  - Other sensory strategies
- 28. Look at the relaxing motion of a lava lamp
- 29. Use lights to calm your kids down. These items are some examples: a rainbow curtain, night light projector or electric jelly fish tank.
- 30. Soothing noises, like the ones you hear in nature or in this wave projector
- 31. Use your sensory bottles
- 32. An indoor swing (the back and forth movement of a swing is extremely soothing)
- 33. Enjoy the rocking input from a rocking chair.
- 34. Essential Oils

### **“Change of Scene” Calm Down Ideas**

Sometimes it helps to move away from the situation or setting that has triggered the anxiety or upset. Examples of this calm down strategy could be:

- 35. Move to a different room from where the problem is happening
- 36. Step out into the garden
- 37. Go for a walk / Mum/Dad take the child for a walk
- 38. Move to the calm down corner

### **“Change of Activity” as a Calm Down Strategy**

Another calm down strategy is to divert your attention from the issues that are causing the problem. These are some calming ideas:

- 39. Watch a favourite tv programme
- 40. Play board games
- 41. Play computer games
- 42. Read a book / Parent reads a story
- 43. Play with playdough
- 44. Make a drawing
- 45. Listen to music
- 46. Sing out loud to release the tension
- 47. Play with fidgeting toys

### **Using Imagination to Calm Down**

- 48. Think about things that make you happy
- 49. Swap bad thought for happy memories
- 50. Write down your worries on a piece of paper and then tear the paper (throw it away)

### **Other Calming Ideas for Kids**

- 51. Help them express their feelings with an emotions chart. Being able to express our emotions also helps us soothe and relax.
- 52. Teach your kids problem-solving skills.  
You can use the “Stop / Think / Do” technique: Stop when you are very angry / Think about what alternatives you have to solve the problem / Implement the chosen one

53. Start counting till you feel more relaxed
54. Keep a journal where you write down about your feelings
55. Practice your positive affirmations
56. Talk to somebody you trust / Ask for help
57. Take a warm bath
58. Have a snack
59. Drink a glass of water or milk
60. Make sure your kid is rested and is having enough hours of sleep