**Mindfulness for Teens Home**

Being a teen can be really stressful! Mindfulness is a powerful way to handle stress, and live life more fully. Mindfulness is all about living fully in the present moment, without judgment, and with an attitude of kindness and curiosity. It’s about breathing, noticing what’s happening right here and now, sending a gentle smile to whatever you’re experiencing in this moment (whether it’s easy or difficult), and then letting it go. You can be mindful anytime, anywhere, no matter what you’re doing. It sounds simple, but it’s not always easy to do, especially when you are stressed! This website provides information, tools, and resources to help you get started.

Recommended Mindfulness apps:

* CALM
* HEADSPACE
* BREATHE
* SMILING MIND
* HAPPI-ME

**Try This! Mindful Breathing**

You can do this mindfulness practice using the instructions below or with the help of the  “Mindful Breathing). I recommend that you start by following along with a recording of your choice a few times. Then, try guiding yourself through the practice, without the recording, just to see what that’s like.

* First, stop. Stop whatever you are doing, or whatever it is that you were about to do, and simply allow yourself to be “here,” without needing to do anything.
* Next, simply bring your attention to your breath, just as it is, in the here and now. You don’t need to make your breath any different than it naturally is. You don’t have to make it slower or deeper. Just bring your attention to your natural breath, with an attitude of curiosity and kindness. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in, inhaling oxygen, and as you breathe out, exhaling carbon dioxide.
* Experiment with saying silently to yourself as you breathe in and out, *Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out.* Or, you can shorten this to *In… Out…*.
* Pay careful attention to your breath, following it as you breathe in and out. Notice the beginning of your in-breath. Follow your in-breath from the beginning, to the middle, all the way to the end. Then notice the pause between your in-breath and your out-breath. Follow your out-breath from the beginning, to the middle, all the way to the end.
* You might want to imagine that you are floating in the ocean and each breath is a wave passing beneath you. Each in-breath lifts you up, and each out- breath sets you back down. Just float gently on the waves of your breath. It might also help to focus on the part of your body where you notice your breath most easily, like your nose—where you can feel the air going in and out—or your belly, which rises and falls with each breath.
* Following your breath doesn’t have to feel like work. Breathing mindfully can be relaxing and enjoyable. If your breath feels good, simply enjoy the sensation and smile.
* If your mind wanders or if you get distracted, that’s okay. That’s what minds do. Don’t judge yourself as having done something “wrong.” You can just notice and gently say to yourself, *Oh, my mind has wandered off*, and perhaps be curious about where your mind wandered off to. Then gently bring your attention back to the next breath.
* You can breathe mindfully like this for three breaths, nine breaths, or, if you have time, two or three minutes.

What was it like to pay attention to your breath? What was it like to come back to the present moment? Did you notice anything interesting or surprising?

You can take some time to do mindful breathing any time of day, anywhere. After breathing mindfully for a few breaths or a few minutes, continue to go about your day, more connected to the present moment. See whether coming back to your breath changes your day in any way. Your breath is always there for you, to keep you alive and nourish your body and your mind. Can you learn to be there for your breath?