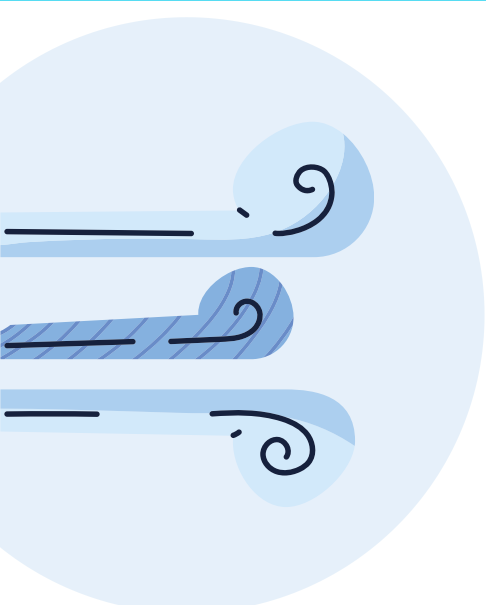


Breathing



WHY MAKE A BREATHING PLEDGE?

Why would you consider making a breathing pledge, after all don't we just breathe?! For a breathing related pledge we suggest taking a couple of minutes each day to perform a deep breathing technique.

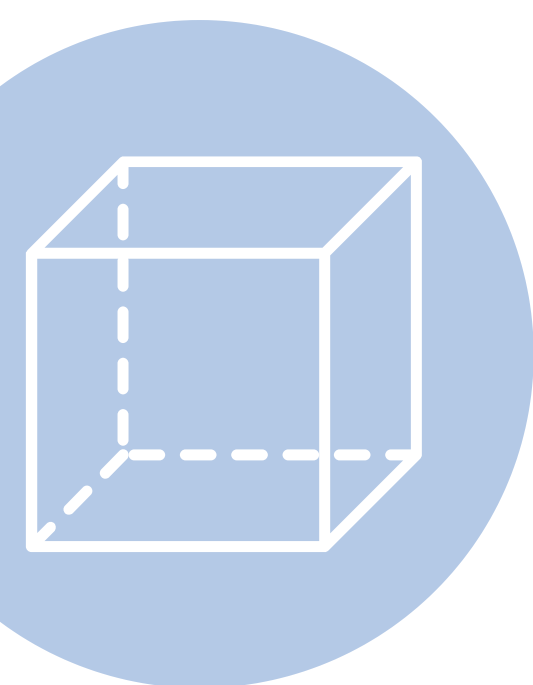
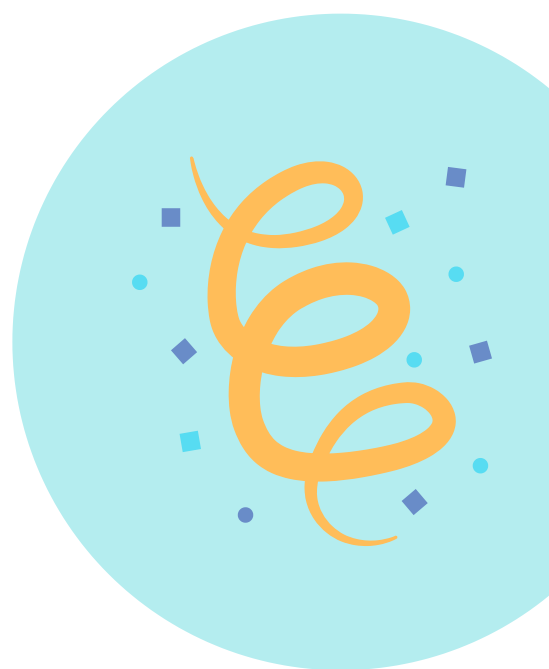
Deep breathing can trigger a calming effect on the brain and body, and could reduce blood pressure, reduce stress, slow your heart rate, reduce anxiety, as well as reducing pain levels and improving concentration.

Try doing some deep breathing twice a day, such as first thing in the morning and late evening. There are lots of breathing exercises to choose from, below are some ideas.

If you experience any discomfort with a technique then please use a different one. If you have concerns please seek medical advice.

GOLDEN THREAD

This breathing exercise focuses on a longer exhale. Take a normal breath in through your nose and ensure your lips are slightly parted as you breath out through your mouth for as long as is comfortable. As you breath out imagine that you are blowing out a golden thread which is spinning away from you for the duration of the exhale. Focus on the appearance of the golden thread as it leaves your mouth. Tips to get the most from golden thread breathing are: if it feels safe to do so close your eyes; try to keep your breath slow and steady; make sure you are sitting comfortably; aim for 5 to 10 rounds; do not force the length of the exhale.



BOX BREATHING

There are 4 steps to box breathing (also known as 4 square breathing).

- 1) Breathe in for a count of 4 through your nose
- 2) Hold the breath for a count of 4, stay relaxed
- 3) Breathe out for a count of 4, through your nose
- 4) Wait for a count of 4 with empty lungs before inhaling again, stayed relaxed

Repeat the cycle.

Tips - try to focus on the breath and 4 count; find a space free from distractions; if it feels ok to do so close your eyes; try to keep the 4 count the same speed; start by doing a couple of minutes a day and build up as desired.

HAND BREATHING

- 1) Put one hand up in front of you and extend the index finger on your other hand
- 2) Breathe in as you run your index finger up the outside of your little finger
- 3) Breathe out as your run your index finger down the inside of your little finger
- 4) Continue with the rest of your fingers. Breathe in as you run your index finger up each finger and breathe out as you run your index finger down each finger on the hand in front of you
- 5) Repeat as many times as desired

Tips - try to keep the speed the same up and down and for each finger; find a space free from distractions; focus on the breath.

This is a good breathing exercise for children too.

