

Mindfulness exercise: Bringing awareness to your breathing

For this simple exercise **you only need you to do it – nothing else! Also, you can do it at any time**, so no one will really know that you're doing it.



Simply stop everything you are doing and focus on your breath. Every time you get distracted by an anxious thought or worry, just bring your attention back to your breathing. This exercise is great because it pairs respiratory control with mindfulness for situations when anxiety is too difficult to manage.

Imagine you are climbing up the ladder to a slide while you breathe in deeply. When you exhale, imagine you are sliding down the slide. Pause to get back to the ladder and climb back up when you breathe in, slide down while breathing out.

Now imagine a glass filling or a balloon inflating while you breathe in, emptying while you breathe out.

As you finish your breathing exercise, how do you feel? Calm? Less worried? Happy?

This exercise is great because it pairs respiratory control with mindfulness for situations when anxiety is too difficult to manage. Using imagery helps children and adolescents pay attention to their breathing when they are likely to be distracted while trying to be mindful.