

## SCHOOL BREATHE

### **BELLY & BALL BREATHE**

#### **Belly Breathing**

A healthy breath should always be whereby the belly is rising on the inhalation. This shows that the diaphragm is working to its optimum as when we breathe in, the diaphragm should descend, creating a soft rounding of the belly with each in breath. The breath should always enter and leave the nose. Encourage children (many are habitual mouth breathers) to breathe through their noses.

It's best to practice full diaphragmatic breathing at least two or three times a day for a couple of minutes each time. Always breathe in through the nose throughout your day. A nasal breath is a healthy way to breathe as the filtering system within the nasal cavity helps protect the body's immune system.

Many children are 'upper chest breathers' (whereby the upper chest rises more on the inhalation) so this exercise may take time to master so a little and often approach to practice is the key.

#### **Benefits of practicing the technique**

- Builds breath awareness
- Brings children into the present moment
- Cultivates healthy breathing habits
- Encourages a 'belly breath'
- Calms the nervous system
- Encourages a healthy nasal breath

#### **When to practice?**

Beginning of the day to help your child/ren start the day in a calmer frame of mind.

Within the video (you can view on youtube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Syd88qmDRA> - we use an expandable breathing ball to demonstrate an expanding belly on the inhalation. The children can imagine their belly as the expanding ball to help them engage the lower respiratory muscles and develop a healthy breath.

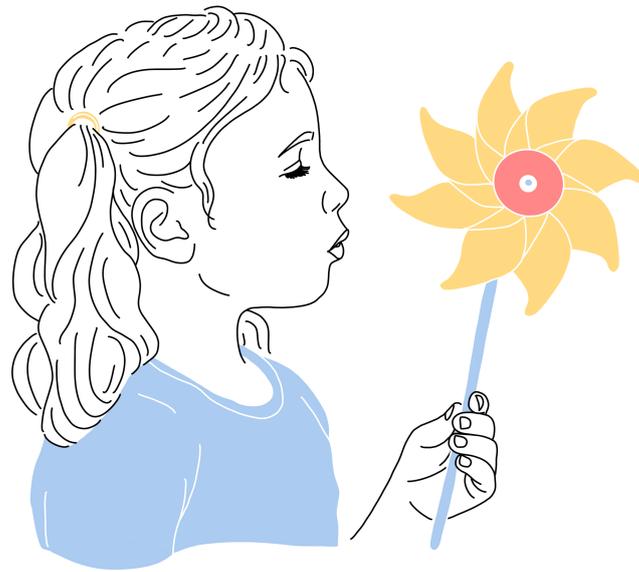
First practice this exercise seated and maybe then try it standing up. This will enable the children to have a break from a seated posture which can compromise a healthy breath.

This can also be practiced laying down, before or after exercise to help the children fully access a full belly breath (it's much easier to experience the belly rising when laying flat on your back). Many children like to practice this before bedtime too. If your child is extremely fidgety and/or anxious, we highly recommend they lay on the belly, with their head to one side and their arms resting by their sides for this exercise. They should be able to feel the belly touch the floor firmly as they breathe in.

### **& Breathe**

- Can be lying down, standing, or find a comfortable seat and place your feet firmly on the floor.
- Place the palms of your hands just below your belly button. This is your breathing space
- Make sure there is a little space between top teeth and bottom teeth so there is little tension in the jaw muscles
- Take a slow breath in through the nose and see if you notice the belly rising with the hands, just like a balloon filling with air, or imagine the colorful ball expanding here.
- Breathing out slowly through the nose, (the belly should deflate, just like a balloon losing air), and return to it's resting position.
- Breathing in, imagine the ball (or balloon) in your belly expanding a little more now. Or you can visualize a balloon rising filling with air. Can you feel or see your belly rise?
- Breathing out, feel the belly lower into it's starting position.
- Now lets count (increase or decrease the count depending on their ability...some younger children may only be able to breathe in for a count of 3)
- Breathing in 1...2...3... (you can up the count to 4 or 5 if you are older with bigger lungs)
- Breathing out 1...2...3...(you can up the count on the exhale too to 4 or 5 for older children)
- Repeat for 5 – 10 rounds to really try and establish a belly breath
- How are you feeling?

Quote of the week below....



*“You’ll never get bored when you try something new.  
There’s really no limit to what you can do.”*

*- Dr Seuss*

all copyright

[www.schoolbreathe.com](http://www.schoolbreathe.com)