

Mindful Kids Practice: Coming Back to the Positive

One way our brain keeps us safe is by staying very focused on whatever seems wrong or off or dangerous. Sometimes, it's important to notice that kind of thing: Take care of yourself or find someone you trust to help.

Sometimes, what happens instead is that we can't stop thinking about something we don't like. You may feel stressed by a test, or a friend, or your parents. It can be hard to let go of that kind of thought. Sometimes, it takes practice to focus on the good stuff, too.

Lie down somewhere comfortable. Let your arms and legs fall to the ground. Close your eyes gently.

Start to notice how your body changes with each breath you take. Each time you breathe, your belly moves up, and your belly moves down. If it is easier, put a hand on your belly. Or if you want, put a stuffed animal there.

Each time you breathe, your belly moves. Your hand, or your toy, rises, and then falls. See if you can count ten breaths that way. Breathing in, **one**, breathing out, **one**. (Repeat for nine more inhales, and nine more exhales.)

When you lose count, don't worry about it. That's normal, and happens to everyone. Come back to whatever number you last remember.

Now, shift your attention to your day. Breathing in, focus on your breath as your belly goes up. Breathing out, focus on something that went well today.

With each breath: breathing in, noticing your belly move, and with each breath out, noticing something that went well today.

Now, picture something about yourself that makes you proud. Breathing in, focus on your belly moving. Breathing out, picture something that makes you proud about yourself. If nothing comes to mind, that sometimes happens. If that's how you feel, picture what you'd wish for yourself instead.

Finally, bring someone to mind who makes you happy. Before we end, try one more practice. Breathing in, notice your belly move. And now, breathing out picture someone who makes you happy.

As you come to the end of this practice, take a few deep breaths, and start to wiggle your arms and legs. Pause and decide what you'd like to do next.

It's normal to have thoughts that make us feel scared or bad. We should never ignore anything important, but it's useful to focus on the rest of our lives too. Take a few minutes every day to notice what has gone well, and see what happens next.