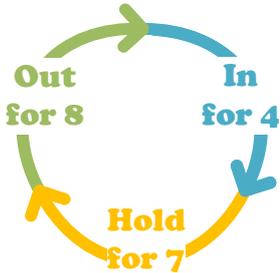


Calming Activities

These activities can help your child relax before an event that they are worried about, calm down after a situation that they are frustrated about, or even just to help settle down for bed-time. They are a variation of grounding strategies with a bit of fun to make it enjoyable for kids, but all basically help to re-focus our minds and our body on the present moment.

Find the activities that work for you and your child, and make them a part of a regular routine. The more they practice these activities, the more useful they will be when they need them the most.



Deep Breathing

This activity will help slow racing thoughts and calm physical symptoms including rapid heart rate, shallow breathing, upset stomach, and restless energy.

Finding somewhere quiet:

- Breath in through your nose for a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 7.
- Breath out through your mouth for a count of 8.
- Repeat for 5-10 times.

Note: if your child is panicked or agitated, you may need to stand face-to-face at eye level and get them to copy your breathing, and gradually introduce counting as they calm down.

5 - see

4 - hear

3 - touch

2 - smell

1 - taste

Sensory Eye-Spy

This activity will help increase your child's awareness of their surroundings, and can serve as a good distraction from worrying thoughts or situations.

Sit down somewhere free from distractions or interruptions, and take it in turns to name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can touch
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste



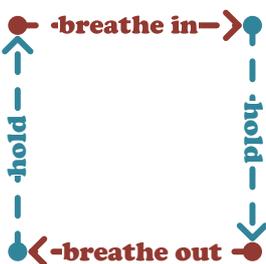
What Can You Hear?

Using this activity can help re-focus your child's attention on their immediate surroundings, and can help to reduce attention on worrying thoughts that might be preventing sleep.

This activity is best done at night, or when your child is comfortable closing their eyes to play.

- Lay down or sit somewhere comfortable.
- Close your eyes.
- Take it in turn to name different things you can hear.

Note: this activity can be modified to increase attention on immediate surroundings (i.e. name things as far away as you can hear, name animals you can hear, etc.).



Palm Tracing

This simple technique will help your child focus on their own senses and away from distracting thoughts or worrying situations.

This activity can be done alone and without attracting too much attention. The basic technique involves tracing a circle on the palm with a finger of the other hand, and can be varied with different shapes, different pressure, different speeds, etc.

You can also combine with breathing: trace a square or trace your palm and fingers, and breath in-out as you trace around.



Guess the Word

This activity can be a useful technique to use for children who respond well to touch (rubbing their back or arms, scratching their head, etc.) to help calm them down.

Get your child to sit with their back to you or lie in bed on their stomach.

- Trace out words on their back (a letter at a time) and have them guess the word.
- Easier variations for younger children can be to just guess letters, numbers or shapes.