

Mindfulness Resources for Schools

Books and Texts

Burdick, D. (2014). *Mindfulness Skills for Kids & Teens*. PESI Publishing & Media.

This is an excellent curriculum/activity book for small group sessions and/or individual instruction. Some of the activities can be used whole classroom.

Rechtschaffen, D. (2014). *The way of mindful education: Cultivating well-being in teachers and students*. WW Norton & Company.

This is the foundational text used in the learning series. It contains worksheets to provoke experiential thinking in readers.

Rechtschaffen, D. (2014). *The way of mindful education: Cultivating well-being in teachers and students*. WW Norton & Company.

This is an additional text by the same author as above containing additional resources for bringing mindfulness into the classroom.

Broderick, P. (2013). *Learning to breathe*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger

The subtitle calls this “A Mindfulness Curriculum for Adolescents to Cultivate Emotion Regulation, Attention, and Performance” and I have utilized meditations from this curriculum with adults, as well.

Jennings, P. A. (2015). *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom (The Norton Series on the Social Neuroscience of Education)*. WW Norton & Company.

Dr. Jennings is an Associate Professor at the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education at University of Virginia and her focus area connects mindfulness, teaching and learning, and the social-emotional context of the classroom.

Olson, K. (2014). *The Invisible Classroom: Relationships, Neuroscience & Mindfulness in School (The Norton Series on the Social Neuroscience of Education)*. WW Norton & Company.

This is a particularly helpful resource for a book study or other form of learning to connect mindfulness practice with other issues, such as support for trauma-impacted students, how restorative practices cultivate mindfulness and heartfulness, and brain science supporting these and other social-emotional practices.

Greenland, S. K. (2017). *Mindful games activity cards*. Shambhala Publications, Inc.

These are activity cards that focus on quick mindfulness activities for whole classroom use. Appropriate for ages ECE - Teen (each card indicates the appropriate age level).

Online Resources

Edutopia: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/mindfulness-resources>

Mindful Schools: <http://www.mindfulschools.org/resources/explore-mindful-resources/>

Headspace App

- <https://www.headspace.com/>
- Cost to purchase app/guided meditations
- Some free resource and information

MindUp

- <https://mindup.org/>
- Elementary and middle school
- Cost to purchase book and curriculum
- Focus on emotional regulation and mindfulness

Learning to Breathe

- <http://learning2breathe.org/>
- Designed for adolescents
- Cost to purchase book and materials
- Focus on emotional regulation and mindfulness
- Can be large or small group/universal or targeted

Mindful Classroom Activities and Exercises

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Have students tense and then relax muscle groups in their body from the ground up, repeating each group two times.

Take a comfortable seat with both feet flat on the floor. When I give you the instruction, we're going to squeeze each of our muscle groups as hard as we can, then relax them. Ready?

Let's start with our feet. Squeeze or tense your foot muscles as hard as you can. Keep going, and...release. Let's do that again: squeeze your foot muscles....and release (should hold for about 5 seconds each).

Next we'll do our legs. Squeeze your leg muscles as tight as you can...and release. Repeat.

Repeat this process for the glutes, core/stomach, arms, hands, and face.

End by having students relax their whole bodies and then "shake it out."

If you don't have enough time for the full progression, you can decrease the number of repetitions or combine muscle groups (ie, instead of doing feet, legs, and glutes, you can just do legs).

Deep Belly Breaths

Younger students may want to lay on the floor with a toy, object, or hand on their belly; older students can sit in a chair with their hands on their stomachs. Instruct students to take a deep breath into their belly and see how far they can get the object or their hand to rise.

Sit in a comfortable position with your feet flat on the ground (or lay down) and put your hand on your belly. Take a deep, slow breath in to your belly. Look at your hand – how far out is it going? Breathe out and take another deep, slow breath in, and see how far your hand can rise. Make sure you're not pushing out your stomach, but you're letting your breath fill your belly. Now breathe out slowly, and try to get all the air out of your lungs.

Repeat a few more times. Offer to have students close their eyes if they'd like. If you're counting or timing the breaths in the future, try to make the exhale last longer than the inhale.

Square Breathing

Find a comfortable seat, with your eyes open or closed. In this activity we're going to breathe in for four counts, hold for four counts, breathe out for four counts, and hold again for four counts – that's why it's called 'square breathing.' Ready?

Breathe in...2...3...4

Hold...2...3...4

Breathe out...2...3...4

Hold...2...3...4

Repeat at least two more times, continuing to count for students. For younger students, you may want to trace a square on the board or in the air as you count.

Smell the Flower, Blow Out the Candle

This is a simple strategy for younger students. Have them hold up a finger and pretend it's a flower; take a deep breath in and smell the flower. Now have them pretend their finger is a birthday candle; make a big exhale and blow out the candle. Repeat a few times.

Five Senses

Please sit silently in whatever position is comfortable to you. Let's pay attention to the world around us.

Thinking quietly to yourself, name five things you can see.

Now name four things you can hear.

Find three things you can feel. You can touch the things around you with your hands, or see if you can identify things you already feel with your body like the texture of your clothes or the weight of your seat in the chair.

Now name two things you can smell.

And finally one thing you can taste.

You can start and/or end this with a breathing exercise. You may also want to ask students if they were surprised by anything they noticed.

Chime

This is a great quick activity to do after a transition to get everyone calm and centered again.

Have students sit quietly and comfortably. Sound a chime, bell, or gong. Ask students to listen quietly and raise their hands, put up a finger, or open their eyes/look at you (whichever you choose) when they can no longer hear the ring.

Mindful Listening

Have students sit quietly and name, individually or as a class, everything they can hear for one minute.