

Heartbeat Exercise

Materials: google single chime sound effect on phone; “somewhere else” to “right here, right now” print out.

Paying attention to our heartbeat and our breath is a good way to practice being mindful. Mindfulness is the feeling of being right here, right now, in this moment, and letting any other thoughts or feelings pass by us. Both kids and grown ups can learn how to use mindfulness practice to help them feel more focused, be better learners, and have stronger friendships with each other.

Today, we are going to do a mindfulness exercise together. Here’s how the exercise will go. We will start by sitting quietly and seeing if we can pay close attention to our breath and our heartbeat while we have one hand on our hearts and the other on our bellies. Then, we will all stand up - when you hear this sound <play chime sound on phone>, we will do some movement in place for 30 seconds (jumping in place or jumping jacks, if we have enough room to open and close our arms and not get into other people’s space). When we hear this sound again <play chime sound on phone>, we will all return to sitting positions and place one hand on our heart and one hand on our belly and notice the feeling of our breathing and our heartbeating again. Some people say that a simple mindfulness exercise like this can help us be *extra* ready for learning and problem-solving for the rest of the day! If you decide not to participate in the mindfulness exercise today, that’s perfectly fine - please just remember to keep your voices quiet and your bodies still so that everyone who wants to can focus really well. Okay, let’s get started!

First, when you’re ready, if you’d like, let’s sit up tall and still and place one hand over our hearts and one hand over our bellies. Let’s tune into the feeling of our belly getting bigger and smaller as we breathe in... and out. Can you feel your belly get bigger when you fill up your lungs with air? Can you feel the thump thump... thump thump of your heart beating? Lots of times, even though our bodies are “right here, right now” what we’re thinking or feeling has to do with something else, or somewhere else.

Where are your thoughts? Where are your feelings? Are they right here, right now? Are they somewhere else? If your thoughts and feelings are “right here, right now” show me that by putting your hands together in front of you, like this <show

Heartbeat Exercise

student “namaste, prayer position”>. If your thoughts or feelings are “somewhere else,” show me that by reaching your hands out to the sides, like this <do that>. Thank you.

When you’re ready, please stand up. Listen for the chime, and when you hear it, if you’d like, begin jumping (or doing jumping jacks) in place. Remember, when you hear the chime again, it will be time to return to a sitting position and place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly once again. <play chime, allow THIRTY SECONDS to pass, play chime again>.

Thanks for remembering to return to a sitting position. If you’d like, you can close your eyes - sometimes this helps us notice our breathing and our heartbeat even better than when our eyes are open. With one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly, sit quietly and still.

Where are your thoughts? Where are your feelings? Are they right here, right now? Are they somewhere else? If your thoughts and feelings are “right here, right now” show me that by putting your hands together in front of you, like this <show student “namaste, prayer position”>. If your thoughts or feelings are “somewhere else,” show me that by reaching your hands out to the sides, like this <do that>. Thank you.

Would anyone like to tell me how this mindfulness exercise felt to them? Or how you are feeling differently now than you did before we started?

Thank you for welcoming me as a guest to your classroom today. Before I go, let’s take three big breaths together and pay close attention to them as a reminder about how cool it feels to be “right here, right now.” Alright. When you’re ready, slowly breathe in through your nose until your lungs and belly feel full... and slowly exhale through your mouth. <Repeat 2x>. We can come back to this feeling again anytime we decide to slow down and pay attention to our breathing.