

# RELAXATION STRETCHING

## How To Do It:

- If possible, go to a quiet and peaceful place with no distractions.
- Stretch both sides of body, keep things even
- Don't stretch to point of pain
- Stretch slowly, holding stretch for 15 seconds then releasing slowly
- Don't bounce or jerk, slowly and smoothly
- Never hold breath but use deep easy breaths, stretching should be relaxing (think of a word or phrase to repeat in your head with each breath to help with relaxation and focus, emptying your mind of all other thoughts)
  - Stretches
    - Neck
    - Shoulders
    - Arms
    - Hands
    - Fingers
    - Stomach
    - Back
    - Legs
    - Feet
  - Now sit quietly, breath normally, and observe how you feel physically, mentally, and emotionally.
    - Is the result good or bad?
    - How do you feel in all ways?
    - Was it helpful and how?
    - Which of the stretches could be done in school, at home, elsewhere?
    - When is a good time to do the appropriate stretches in school, at home, elsewhere?
    - What does stretching relaxation help and why?
    - Why do we do this and learn this?
    - Who can do this?
    - Was it difficult or easy?
    - Was it enjoyable and why or why not?
    - Any other thoughts/comments?

# DEEP BREATHING

- How To Do It:
  - When you are stressed and tense, you breathe shallow, which means less air or oxygen to the body and brain. This means you can't move as well and your brain doesn't think as well or make as good of decisions. You can't remember stuff as well, get moody with friends and others, do worse on tests and class work, etc. It's bad for not only you but people around you.
  - Deep breathing will increase air or oxygen to entire body so the brain will think and make better choices. You will be able to remember better, focus better, resolve conflicts better and make better choices, do better on class work and tests, etc.
  - Specifically explain that deep breathing has positive effects when used in school
    - Think better and more clearly
    - Feel happier
    - More patient
    - Better attention and focus
    - Less agitated, aggressive, and likely to fight and bicker
    - More friendly
    - Less anxious and nervous
- Lungs are like kitchen sponges. Ask if students have ever squeezed a kitchen sponge and let it go. Lungs are just like this, but with air instead of water. If you squeeze them, all the air gets pushed out. If you let go of them, they expand back to their original size and fill up with air, like a kitchen sponge does with water.
- Lungs cannot squeeze themselves though, so what in the body squeezes lungs to push air out and then to make room for them to expand back to their original sizes? Muscles called the diaphragm.
- 5 step method to taking the ultimate deep breath to relax.
  1. Slowly breathe in through nose
  2. Stomach, not chest should expand outward (feel stomach move with hand)
  3. Now with the stomach as far out as it can go, suck in a little more air by lifting and pushing the chest up and out (feel chest expand with other hand)

# DEEP BREATHING

4. Hold breath for 2-3 seconds
5. Slowly breathe out through mouth quietly

- Practice Deep Breathing
  - Now have students sit straight in chairs (because for the stomach to stick out to let the lungs get more room to expand) you cannot be slouching.
  - Now repeat this over and over for several minutes.
  - Relaxing music or sounds can be played during practice and lights turned down or off.
  
- Deep breathing can be used during school or at home to help them when feeling tense, uptight, nervous, anxious, inattentive, unfocused, frustrated, impatient, annoyed, aggressive, angry, upset, etc.
  - This may be during a test, before a test, after an argument, during class work, before volunteering, etc.

Whatever amount of time you have, use it to deep breath. That may only allow time for one deep breath, which is okay if that's all you have time for.

How did the exercise make you feel?

Who can do this exercise?

What can this exercise help with?

Was it easy or difficult?

Think of some times this week that deep breathing would help with: