

Breathing and Movement

Breathwork refers to many forms of conscious alteration of breathing, such as connecting in-breath with out-breath, or intentionally changing the pace or deepness of breath. Breathwork is something that children of all ages can learn and practice. For younger children, it is fun to use props like pinwheels and bubbles to support breathwork activities. Adolescents will enjoy learning that they can practice breathing activities without any props and without anyone knowing they are practicing! The following breathwork activities will help you teach children how they can use their breath to calm themselves and to notice various body sensations.

Movement is an act of changing physical location or position. Engaging children in movement activities helps them to become more aware of their bodies and the sensations within their bodies. This awareness is the first step to mastering emotional regulation.


Start by teaching breathwork and movement activities to children and then practice them on a regular basis. Encourage them to practice the activities on their own or with the help of their parent/caregiver. The goal is for them to easily engage in breathing or movement changes when they need help regulating their emotions or behaviors. The more they practice, the easier it will become for them to call upon these resources during uncomfortable or overwhelming situations.


For each breathwork and movement activity, ask children to notice how their bodies feel before and after the activities. Compare the similarities and differences.


Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5


Triangle Breathing

Directions

-  *Imagine a triangle.*

-  *Breathe in while raising your arms above your head into the point of a triangle. 1-2-3.*

-  *Breathe out while you lower your arms outward on an angle from your shoulders creating the two sides of a triangle. 1-2-3.*

-  *Now, counting to 6, slowly bring your hands into the middle of your body creating the bottom of the triangle. 1-2-3-4-5-6. Say, All is still.*

Repeat several times.



Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Smell the Flowers Breath**Directions:**

The child can sit during this activity. A nice addition is to have soft music playing in the background as you guide the activity and the child colors.



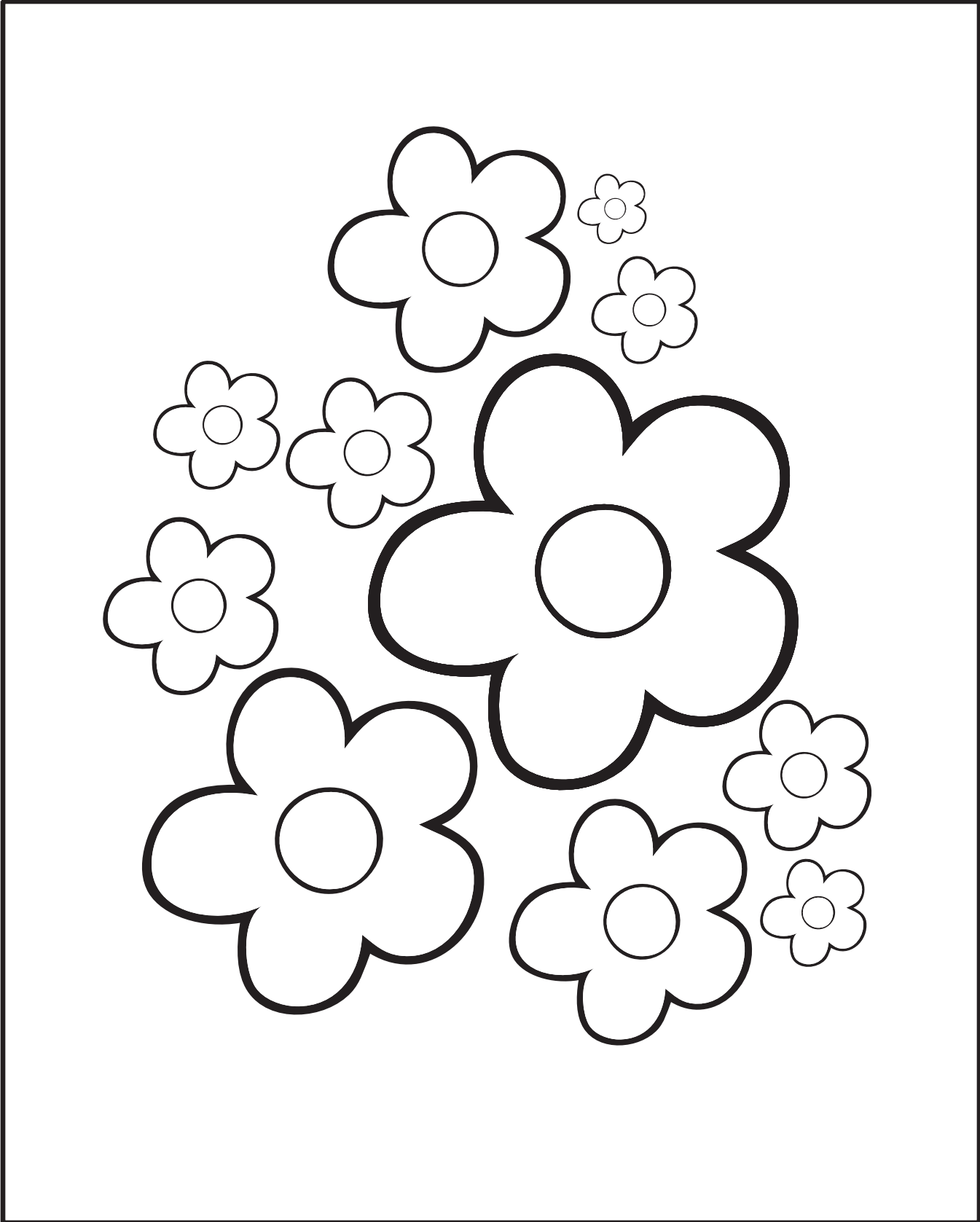
Imagine that you smell a beautiful flower. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Repeat 3 times.




Very good, now take your time and color in these flowers. As you color pay attention to your breathing.


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Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Push the Great Wall**Directions:**

-  Stand up with your feet shoulder-width apart and place your hands, palms flat, on a wall in front of you. You should be a comfortable distance away from wall (your arms should be just a little bit bent at the elbows.)

-  When I say, “push” I would like you to push the wall in front of you as if you are trying to push the wall over. We will do this a few times and each times I will count a little bit longer. Hold the count and then you can release your push. Okay, “push” 1-2 push hard 3-4-5. Great, now release your push and you can shake your arms out.

-  Okay again “push” 1-2-3 push hard 4-5-6 harder 7-8-9. Great job, now release and shake your arms out again.

-  Okay last time so give it all you’ve got “push” 1-2-3-push-4-5-6-push-push-8-9-10. Very good! Release your push.