



HELPING YOUR CHILD BUILD A TOOLBOX OF SAFE, EFFECTIVE COPING SKILLS

COPING SKILL 2: *MAKE TIME FOR MENTAL REST*

Everyone around the world is experiencing increased worry right now, including children and teens. You can help your child take mental breaks by practicing a few minutes of relaxation or mindfulness together or teaching them how to do this on their own. Research shows that even 5 minutes a day of relaxation practice can help reduce stress, decrease inappropriate behavior, boost concentration, and improve sleep. Here are a few strategies you can

Grades Pre K - 2	Grades 3 - 6	Grades 7 - 12
<p>Animal yoga: Pretend to be different animals, and shape your body into curled up and stretched out positions. Imagine being that animal feeling cozy in places of safety, or relaxing in nature.</p> <p>Slow breath: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 2, breathe out for 4 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times while lying down or sitting comfortably.</p> <p>Tighten & Relax: Move through each major body part, slowly tightening (10 seconds) and relaxing (10 seconds) the muscles in each one.</p>	<p>5 Senses: Spend 30 seconds focusing on each sense (sight, smell, sound, etc.) and observe what you notice.</p> <p>Imaginary vacation: Close your eyes and pretend you are in a favorite place – a beach, your room, a hot air balloon – and imagine, tell, or write about what it is like there.</p> <p>Mindful eating: Hold a piece of food in your hand (raisin, M&M, etc.) and look at, feel, and smell, it. Then put it on your tongue and notice its smell, taste, and texture before chewing and swallowing.</p>	<p>Body Scan: Mentally observe your whole body, one part at a time. Note where you feel tension, pressure, pain, or calm. Try to spread the calm throughout your body.</p> <p>Loving Kindness: Create a statement of forgiveness, kindness, wellness, or love and send it to yourself. Then in your mind send that message to loved ones, friends, family, neighbors, your community, and finally, the whole world.</p> <p>Tolerating Emotional Waves: Focus on the image of difficult emotions being like waves that come and go. You can ride the wave of each emotion, just tolerating it when it's present, and trusting it will eventually roll on and give way to a moment of calm afterwards.</p>

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT RELAXATION, MINDFULNESS, OR MEDITATION:

- Short [video](#) about relaxation
- [TRAILS](#) relaxation materials: worksheets, handouts, videos, and more!
- [TRAILS](#) mindful materials: worksheets, handouts, videos, and more!
- [KidsHealth](#): Relaxation Techniques
- [American Psychological Association](#): Tips for building resilience
- [Go Zen](#): 50 Calm Down Ideas
- [Mindfulness for Teens](#) (includes videos and guided meditations)

HTSD & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- [HTSD MENTAL HEALTH WEBSITE](#)
- HAMILTON CARES (609) 476-6138
- NJ MENTAL HEALTH CARES:
1-866-202-HELP
- ATLANTICARE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
(609) 646-9159
- [ATLANTIC COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION](#)