



Teaching Mindfulness to Children

By Joanne Moules

BA Religious Studies, Kundalini Yoga Teacher Level 1 & 2 (ongoing), Starchild Yoga Instructor, Yoga for The Special Child Facilitator and qualified in Neurobiology of Kundalini Yoga and Mental Health Illness

Workshop Devised by Jo Moules

Precautions

The techniques and teaching methods used in this workshop and described in this manual are not intended as a substitute for medical advice. We are all different and not all practices are ideal for everyone. If in any doubt, consult a doctor or counsellor.

To reduce the risk of injury, never force or strain yourself during any exercise or activity, stop and seek medical advice if necessary.

Any liability, loss or damage in connection with the use of the Jo Yoga Method and its instruction including, but not limited to, any liability, loss or damage arising from the performance of the practices demonstrated here, or any advice or information provided by Jo Yoga is expressly disclaimed.

Contact Details

38a West Banks, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 7QQ

t +44 7736 469868

e jo@joyogauk.co.uk

w joyogauk.co.uk



TEACHING MINDFULNESS TO CHILDREN

A workshop for teachers, parents and others who work in youth establishments with a love for helping children.

As a Yoga Teacher I specialise and focus on teaching children and young adults under the age of 18 and those older who have disabilities. My reasons for this have varied from believing that working with children is more fun (not always true) to managing my professional life around my son's school timetable (again – hasn't always worked out) – however one thing I know for certain, and that I have learnt over the hundreds of children I have taught, is that their need is great and we are currently at an important turning point in society.

This Jo Yoga Teaching Mindfulness to Children Workshop provides you with the tools to create a nurturing and caring environment for children, encouraging those in your care to reach their full potential and become more aware of themselves and those around them.

Jo Yoga elevates children and enables them to be empowered and live their best life – knowing that it is their birth right to be Happy, Healthy & Whole.

Working with and being around children encourages us to 'think on our feet', 'outside the box' and to ALWAYS remain the student. They are our greatest teachers and my greatest inspiration; however, I am also inspired by other great minds who have studied and worked with children and believe the philosophy that children are our future. The likes of Sonia Sumar (Creator of Yoga for the Special Child) and Siri Arti Kur (Creator of Starchild Yoga) are my teachers and inspiration.

As the digital age continues to grow at an extraordinary rate and 24hr connectivity is encouraging the greatest disconnection amongst humans, NOW is the time to teach Mindfulness & Self Care.

And so, I welcome and congratulate you in recognising that, as the guiding generation, WE CAN help and ease any struggles that children may be experiencing.

I am delighted to venture on this journey alongside you and assist in equipping you with a tool kit of handy practices to share, enable and empower yourself and the children to self soothe, breath through their challenges and come out smiling on the other side.

Please keep in mind that I am not a child psychologist or counsellor, however my hands-on experience during yoga & mindfulness classes, workshops in schools since 2013, plus any unofficial advice that has been sought by parents, has equipped me with the knowledge and know how to help with many situations – all of which need to be shared.

Children these days are experiencing greater levels of stress and anxiety than ever recorded previously. At the time of writing, statistics showed as many as 1 in 10 children were experiencing anxiety or depression at any one time.

This workshop will introduce you to ways of teaching mindfulness. We will cover various scenarios & age groups, techniques, games and breath practices.

I encourage you to 'learn by doing' and incorporate the practices into your students' classes as much as possible. Be open to learn from the children and build on the foundational knowledge you receive today.

This is a journey for you too, be creative, trust your ability and enjoy the unfolding magic as you too grow in confidence and your practices take on their own form and direction.

Mindfulness is a tool that when taught well, from an early age, can stay with children for life.

What a Gift!

Lots of love

Jo xx

Kundalini Yoga & Mindfulness

First, a confession! I never set out to teach Yoga and Mindfulness!! Yoga for me was a hobby and a past time. It was something I enjoyed, it made me feel good, and allowed me to believe that there was something more wonderful in the universe than what we could physically see.

Whilst studying, I stumbled across a word which sprung out at me - 'Kundalini'!

I decided to try it.

Maya Fiennes was the name of the teacher - her beautiful smile, sing song voice and calming aura made me feel at ease.

I kid you not, that 1 exercise - 1 EXERCISE!! - changed my life.

The simple 3-minute warm up asana of Spinal Flexes ignited something in my body that I had no idea even existed.

I felt awakened, alive and Buzzing!

I went on further to experience deep meditations.

Until I found Kundalini Yoga I struggled to find mental peace, I suffered with depression and other mental health challenges.

Kundalini Yoga uses Mantra. Pranayama (Breath Work), Postures, Mudras (Hand gestures) and Eye placement to lead the Yogi to a blissful relaxed state.

The Mantras, Songs, Mudras and general playfulness of the style are perfect for children. The mantras lead them easily into meditation, mindfulness goes hand in hand (literally) with the mudras and the movements enable them to remove tension from their growing bodies.

Kundalini Yoga is a style that children grasp effortlessly and empowers them; therefore, I use it every time when practicing mindfulness. The vibrational sound of mantra elevates the children's mood and energy.

There are particular practices that we must stick to when working with & teaching children -

Build their Self Esteem with praise

Challenge Them

Listen to Them

Expect Respect

Create Healthy Boundaries)

Help them to be community minded

Let them go

By working with children, you have a direct effect on the future generation.

'Open your heart and let your heart be opened by the children you teach, let your light shine and your radiance know no bounds'. – Siri Arti Kaur

Mindfulness

/'mʌɪn(d)f(ʊ)lnəs/

noun

1.

the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.

"their mindfulness of the wider cinematic tradition"

2.

a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

Today excessive pressure is placed on children of all ages from various outside sources. Schools are expected to reach targets, teachers and parents are under professional and financial pressure – all of which filters down to the children.

Alongside these factors, there is no getting away from the part that Social Media plays on mental health. As an adult, I have been known to look at Facebook first thing in the morning and feel frustrated by the first thing I have seen – before I have even spoken to anyone!! This happens to millions of children every single morning – waking up to a text or an envy inducing post from a class mate. Before having left the bedroom, a low mood can already have set in and will have a profound effect on the rest of the day.

Due to external pressures to perform, dealing with stresses at home, having to look and behave in a certain way whilst keeping healthy friendships, children can find themselves burnt out, suffering with stress, depression and anxiety and becoming further and further disconnected from their Self, the body and the human connection.

When emotions are not acknowledged, dealt with or experienced completely, they can fester in the body, potentially leading to an illness (Dis-Ease) or bursting out in other ways such as self-harming, temper, violence and other explosive reactions.

Being present and FEELING an emotion, regardless of discomfort, is the body's reaction to an outside source.

AN EMOTION BEGINS WITH A THOUGHT

Young children naturally exist in the moment and know themselves completely. It is as they get older things begin to change and they are influenced by their environment and other people around them. Thought processes and habitual patterns are created that take them further and further away from their true nature.

Meditation & mindfulness practices focus on bringing the child or young adult back to their true centre and connecting with their body and emotions so that they remember how beautiful and perfect they are.

Controlling the mind frees the human consciousness from fear and doubt.

All fears are put on us from outside circumstances, such as not being enough, or not achieving. Perhaps the fear of changes in circumstances or friendship groups can strengthen this fear.

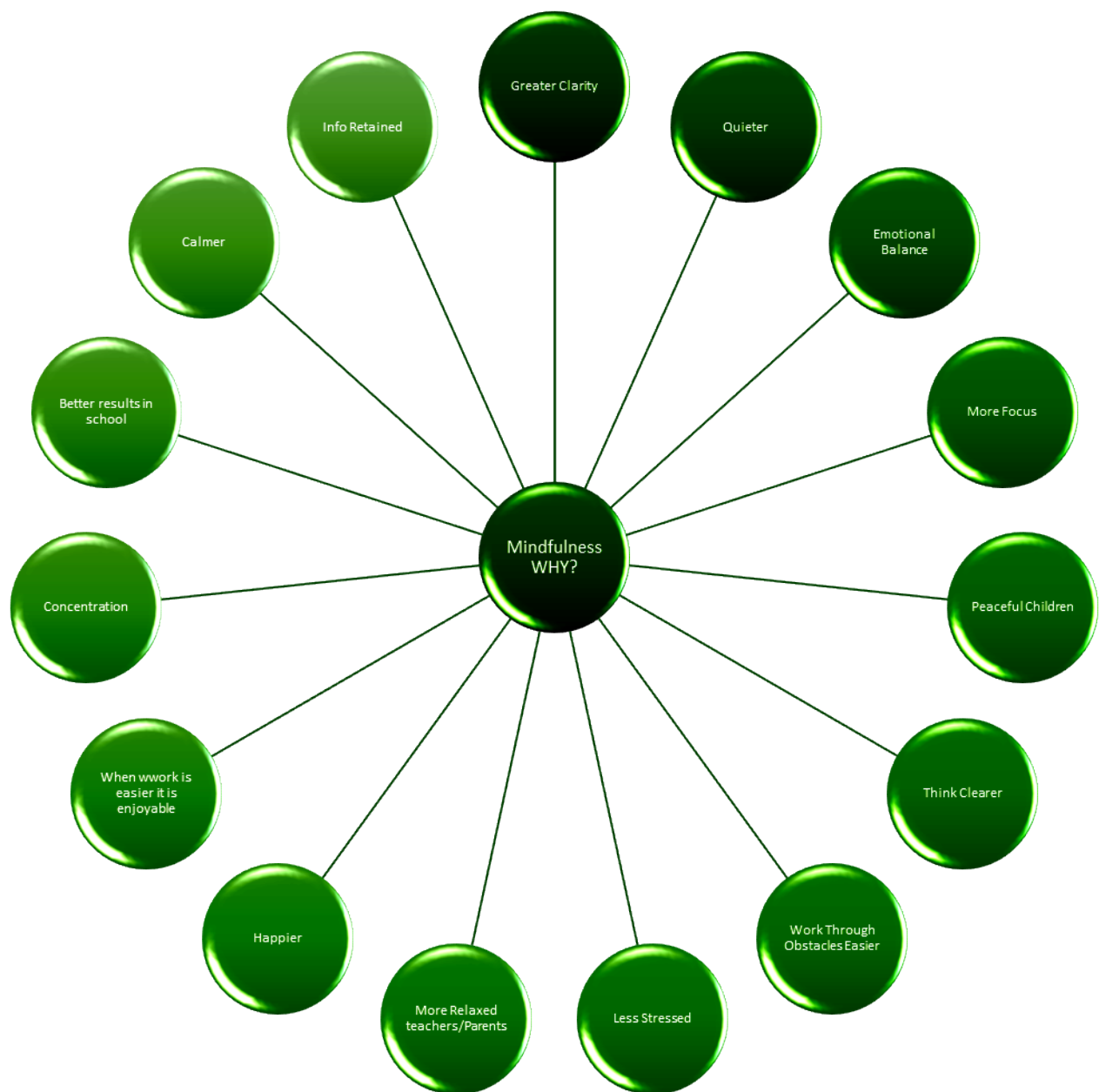
Once control of the mind is established, the thoughts can be managed and 'filed' into

Rational Worries

Irrational worries

Mindfulness enables clarity and less emotive thinking so that the **irrational worries** begin to dissolve, and the **rational worries** can be dealt with in a rational way.

How Important is Mindfulness and Why do we Need it?



By incorporating small mindful practices on a regular basis all-round health and wellbeing will be Increased.

Anxiety/Stress/Mindlessness & The Body

The Nervous System

The main two nervous systems of the body that we need to know about for treating anxiety and mental health illness are

The Sympathetic Nervous System

The Para Sympathetic Nervous System

The Sympathetic nervous system is the one needed to keep us safe.

Often known as the Fight or Flight programming of the body, this will be activated when life threatening danger confronts us. The Sympathetic Nervous system provides the body with an Adrenaline rush needed to help get to a safe place.

Sympathetic Nervous System = **Shit!** Help me.

It is the sympathetic nervous system that kicks in when we are angry, sense danger or feel stressed.

The body is stimulated with a sudden burst of the hormone adrenaline which then turns into cortisol. Too much cortisol in the body over a long period of time will result in possible weight gain, high blood pressure, muscle weakness and mood swings which show as anxiety depression and irritability (ref www.yourhormones.info) among other things.

The Para sympathetic nervous system is the balancer to the sympathetic. This is the system that calms us and steadies the heart rate, blood flow and keeps the body on an equilibrium, ensuring that energy is used for the normal bodily functions.

Parasympathetic Nervous System = **Please** calm down.

It is this system that we want to stimulate when things are getting uncomfortable or unhappy. When you witness a child, a friend or even yourself becoming stressed and unhappy, it is time to bring in the Para Sympathetic Nervous System for all its glory.

So How????

The body has a nerve which runs from the back of the throat and connects with the control of the heart, Lungs and digestive system. **The Vagus Nerve.**

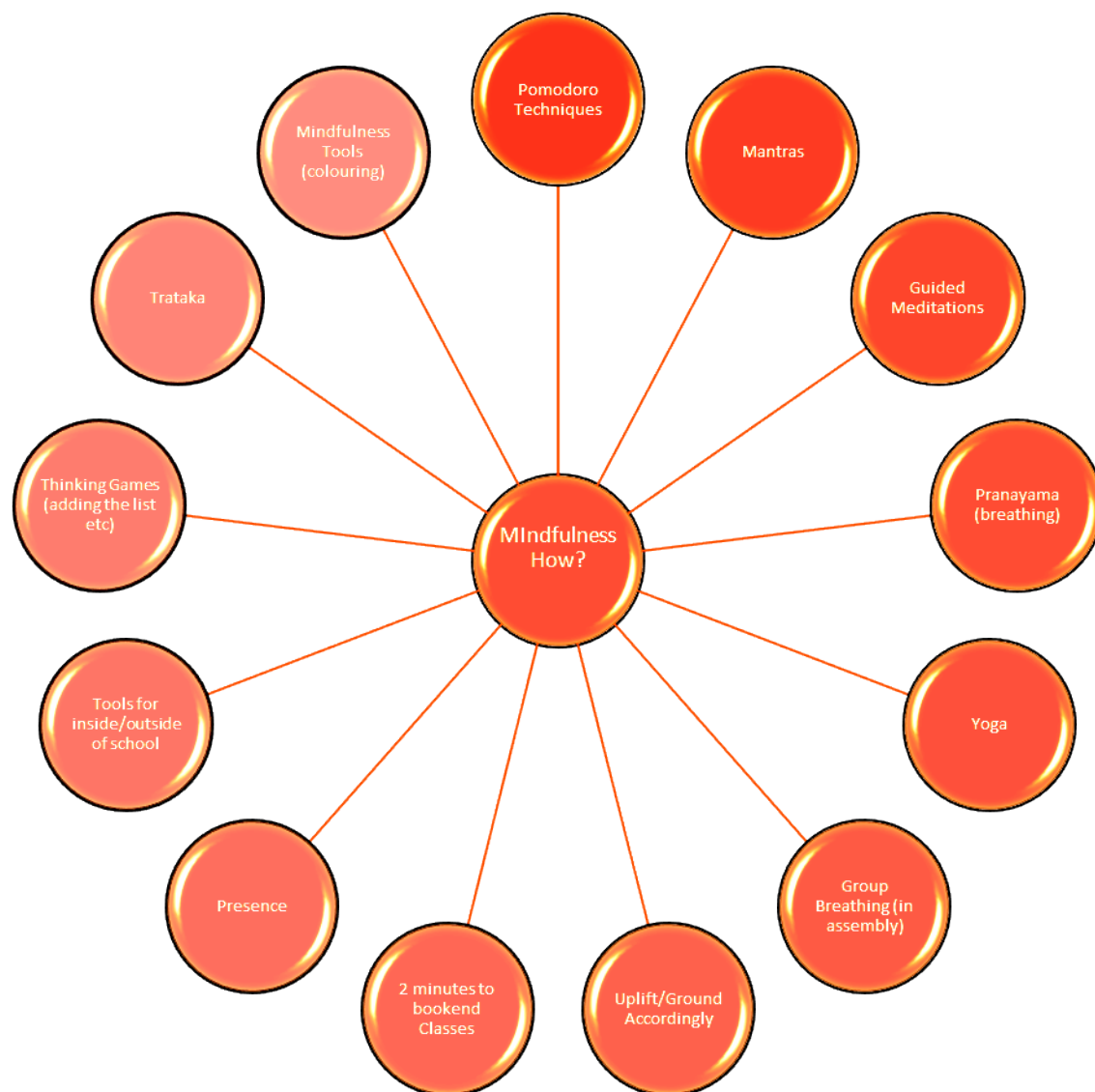
The Vagus Nerve keeps check on what is going on with the heart rate (which raises when adrenaline is pumped into the blood stream), blood pressure and vital organs (which don't get the blood supply they require when adrenaline is present). When changes are detected it reports back to the brain, a bit of a roaming reporter in the body.

Stimulation of the Vagus Nerve immediately counteracts any negative effects on the heart, lungs and vital organs caused by adrenaline or too much cortisol, therefore igniting and stimulating this nerve will kick in the parasympathetic nervous system, calm the heart rate, slow the breathing and relieve tension and anxiety – **and it can work Immediately!**

How is it stimulated?

By exhaling – a long slow exhale. I know that it sounds simple, but it really is, though in moments of extreme stress a deep breath can be hard to achieve, so let us look at ways we can make this easier.

MINDFULNESS - HOW



Mindfulness is not an ALL OR NOTHING practice – it can be small things added into a day.

Presence

The easiest way to enable a child to be mindful is to 'be present'.

100% in the moment.

Usually, young children are constantly in the present moment, however when you witness a child having troubles at home/school/away from you they can be lost in their own thoughts and fears.

Away from you they may have many fears or worries; but enabling them to be present with you, in a 'safe space', will allow them to begin to control their anxieties.

You become a point of reference for stressful moments and they remember the safe feeling you cultivate, and even though you taught it to them, ultimately, they gain self-control.

To teach presence –

Sit in Easy Pose or on a chair with feet flat on the floor.

Palms face down on knees/thighs.

Spine is tall & straight.

Eyes are downcast or closed.

Through the nose – slow, long, deep inhale filling the chest (and tummy) with air.

Slow exhale through the nose.

Through the nose – slow, long deep inhale again.

Sigh out through the mouth.

Focusing on the breath will quieten the mind and dissolve worries from outside of the space.



Uplifting/Grounding

Being open and receptive to the energy of children is paramount in being able to help them accordingly. When their energy is high, for example on windy days, or just after playtime when they have been running around outside, anytime when they are excitable they need to be grounded – adversely when energy is low, and they require some focus and ‘buzz’ they need lifting.

Grounding –

Stand tall in Mountain Pose.

Ground feet (if permissible & safe remove shoes)

Head high with top of towards the sky.

Stand tall & proud feeling the connection between the earth and the sky.

Envision beautiful golden roots growing from the feet and reaching right to the centre of the earth.

Inhale drawing in energy from the centre of the earth traveling up through the feet to the heart centre

As you exhale pass the energy back to the centre of the earth.

**** If children find it difficult to envision they will still benefit by pushing down with their feet and feeling a strong connection to the earth****

Continue for a few breaths.



Uplifting

Put on a piece of fast-moving music that the children like.

Begin shaking one foot, then the other.

Switch to shaking one leg, then the other.

Run on the spot (hot floor)

Wiggle/shake the hips & tummy

Shake one hand, then the other

Switch to shake one arm, then the other

Shoulder shrugs and then shimmy the shoulders

Turn the head one way and then the other (gently, no fast movements with the neck)

Shake the whole body releasing any stuck tense energy.

Repeat the whole process to remove any remaining tension.

Come to stand still, breathing deeply and feel the tingly energy that their bodies have just created.



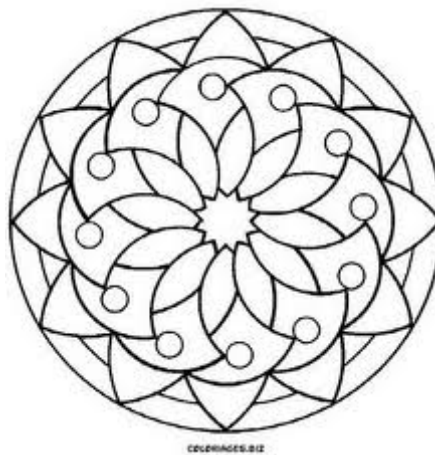
Mindfulness Tools

Creating an area in the classroom or house for internal reflection is a great start. A 'Calm Corner' or 'smiling space' can be somewhere readily available to your children full of mindful or sensory objects.

It is a handy spot that children can use for reflection. It can be any space and decorated as you wish - with cushions, rugs, beanbags – and with beads, bricks, feathers and other items from nature, small journals/notebooks for writing out thoughts and some colouring pens and mandalas to colour. A 'glitter jar',,, books with beautiful pictures, a musical source and head phones with soothing music, unicorn cards (or other guidance toy) can all inspire a child to take mindfulness into their own hands.

Any close work such as needlework, building, creating, painting, writing or any focused activity are great little mindful practices.

www.colormandala.com have great printable mandalas that are a lovely little mindful meditation tool.



Group Breathing

In large groups attempting to time everyone's inhale/exhale to each other is a wonderful connector, and therefore re-establishes the connection, not only too each other but also their own body & emotions.

It is both an uplifting and calming practice.

If you are in a 1:1 situation then sit back to back and, without words, attempt to match your breathing.



Pomodoro Technique

This is not so much a quick mindful tool, but when used effectively, can reduce the anxiety caused by stress inducing tasks.

I use this ALL the time. It is a time management method which uses a finite chunk of time in which to take focused action!

The brain can only fully concentrate for around 14? 20? minutes after that the mind starts to wander and work becomes less productive

(ref: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/oct/14/the-lost-art-of-concentration-being-distracted-in-a-digital-world>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/attention-span-average-british-person-tuned-in-concentration-mobile-phone-a8131156.html>)

The Pomodoro Technique works by breaking down tasks into 25-minute chunks followed by a 5 minute break. The pattern is then repeated up to 4 times, after that a 30-minute break is required.

So, if there is a task to be done (revision, homework etc.) set a timer for 25 mins and allow the child/class to work focused and solidly for that time. Once the timer goes off they rest, take a walk, have a drink, anything that is away from the work. If the task is not finished in the first 25 minutes, then begin again.

This technique is so effective because it gives a sense of urgency to the task in hand, the children do not have the fear of working indefinitely as they know there will be an end – and ultimately the work gets done quicker.

There is a sense of control over the work and this eases the anxiety.

Use Pomodoro and the task will be completed quickly.

MANTRAS, MEDITATIONS & PRANAYAMA

Meditations and mantras are a valuable tool to relieve stress and anxiety, instil mindfulness and teach the children to 'know' and 'understand' their mental chatter. Children are not required to meditate for the same reasons as adults, they don't have old patterns or habits to clear, but instead it is used as an early intervention and it strengthens their memory and focus.

Children can go deeper into meditation more quickly than adults, and therefore should be kept to a short time. They are naturally intuitive, straightforward, and creative & open minded.

Meditation keeps the Pineal gland, the gland used for producing the hormone Melatonin, healthy. Melatonin is used to assist in inducing sleep and keeping the bodies circadian rhythms on point, preventing Insomnia. The Pineal Gland degenerates with age so by teaching meditation from an early age, this can be prevented, helping the whole glandular system remain healthy and effective in later life.

Trataka

This is a meditation practice that is literally 'concentrated gazing'. It develops memory, recall and concentration skills.

Using anything at hand (however I would use a crystal or candle (tea light) flame).

Sitting in Easy pose or on a chair.

Place the object in front of them.

Invite them to gaze at the object.

Allow the eyes to relax so their sight may go blurry or into double vision (this is safe).

The object begins to dance and become magical to the children.

Encourage silence.

They then close their eyes and picture the object in their mind from memory.

To end, cover their eyes with their hands, then open their eyes and slowly slide their hands away from their eyes.



Silent Meditation & Observing the Breath

A great practice to 'bookend' classes.

Invite them to sit quietly (in easy pose or on a chair), hands can be in Gyan Mudra or just resting on the knees.



Encourage them to close their eyes and 'listen' to the breath coming in and going out of their bodies through their nose.

Times vary depending on age:

1 minute for 3-5yr olds

2 minutes for 6-8 yr olds

3 minutes for 9-11yr olds

3-5 minutes for 11 upwards.

Pranayama with Visualisation

Some children find it easier to meditate with a visualisation. Begin as with the breath observation above and then invite them to 'see' a piece of fruit, a flower or a bright light in their minds eye, placed at the centre of the forehead or heart centre.

As they breathe in the fruit/flower/light grows. With each breath the fruit/flower/light grows in strength, size & intensity.

Explain that the breath is the fuel that grows everything, it can be controlled by them and they can use it for good.

When they open their eyes invite them to share their experiences but note that not all children will want to share and should never be forced. Shy children have a right to be shy and all children have the right to keep their experiences private.

The 5:3 Breath

Most anxiety and panic attacks stem from the feeling of a loss of control. So bringing control back to the breathing brings control back to the whole of life. This is also useful for before tests & exams as it can be done discreetly.

My son has admitted to spotting class mates doing focused breathing prior to tests and (as he knows what to look for) this is a favourite. My students have also admitted using it regularly.

This breath pattern ignites peace, balance and focuses the mind.

Sit comfortably with eyes closed.

Through the nose inhale for the count of 5

Hold for the count of 3

Through the nose exhale for the count of 5

Hold for the count of 3

Repeat this cycle for 5 – 7 rounds and then open the eyes and notice how you feel.

Stress relieving breath

This breath pattern easily stimulates the Vagus nerve.

Inhale through the nose using 8 short sharp sniffs

Exhale through the nose in 1 long breathe.

Repeat 5 – 7 times

* younger children may struggle with the 8 sniffs so just lower the amount accordingly*

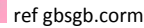
Alternate Nostril Breathing

The brain is made up of the left side – responsible for active, reasoning, logical aspects to our personality – and the right side – creative, emotive and spiritual side. These are often referred to as masculine (left) and feminine (right).

Left side - Analytic thought, logic, language, reasoning, science & Math, writing, numbers skills, right hand control.

Right side – art awareness, creativity, imagination, intuition, holistic thought, music awareness, 3d forms, left hand control – (ref brainmadesimple.com)

Different sides of the brain are required for different tasks and at varying times of the day, however in moments of discomfort, when focus is required and a little calm, we need to balance both sides.



Sit in easy pose or in a chair
Right hand up to nose, left hand on knee
Exhale completely and then use right thumb to block right nostril
Inhale through the left nostril then using the fingers of right hand block left nostril and release right nostril (*with young children they can swap hands as it is easier for them*).
Exhale through the right and then inhale.
Close off right nostril and release fingers on left, exhale.
Continue this cycle for a minute or two with long deep breaths.

Left Nostril Only calming and very beneficial before sleep or after an argument or other tense situation. Block right nostril and breathe long and deep.

Humming Bee Breath

Wonderful in a group setting as the vibrations affect all.

Sound is an asset that we must use for healing. The vibrations used during mantra chanting and meditation create a profound effect on the body at a cellular level. Therefore children love chanting and making sound so much, especially if they are yet to feel too self-conscious. They feel the vibrations within themselves.

This breath encourages good listening skills and concentration as it vibrates and ‘massages’ the brain cells.

Sitting comfortably in easy pose or on a chair

Inhale deeply through the nose and exhale with a hum for as long as possible.

Repeat with eyes closed.

Repeat again with thumbs over ears and fingers resting around the head.

It encourages and inward focus and development of speech as the various parts of the brain are stimulated.



Sa Ta Na Ma (Also called Kirtan Kriya.)

The use of sound, though direction, finger movements and breath all combine to lead the practitioner into a deep meditative state.

This meditation heals past trauma, stress, anxiety and according to 'a study published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease ... confirmed that ... Kirtan Kriya improved brain functioning by increasing connectivity, improving memory, and decreasing mood aberration' (ref www.psychologytoday.com).

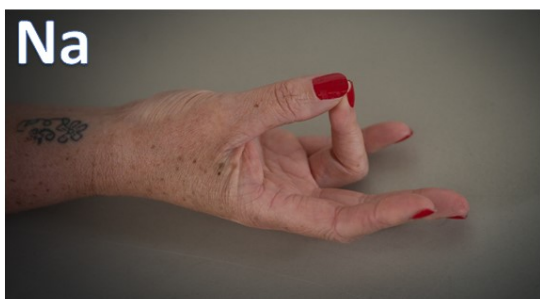
I have used this meditation with children as young as 3, children with Autism, ADHD, depression, stress, physical disabilities, mental disabilities and all, with very little exception, have connected with it and found some peace and focus.

When given the choice, they ask for this one.

In Easy pose, hands resting on knees in Gyan Mudra.
Tall spine and eyes are closed.
Begin to chant/sing Sa Ta Na Ma
On Sa, touch the first finger to thumb
On Ta, touch the second finger to thumb
On Na, touch third finger to thumb
On Ma touch little finger to thumb
Continue for as long as required.

The full meditation is done with 2 minutes chanting in normal voice followed by 2 minutes whispering, 4 minutes silently in the mind, 2 minutes whisper and 2 minutes normal voice.

I often use music for this meditation and particularly like 'Sa Ta Na Ma' by Jiwanpal Kaur available on iTunes.



Humee Hum Brahm Hum (Grounding)

The hums and 'mmm' sounds in this mantra connect the child back into their body if they are feeling a loss of control or 'out of sorts'. The sound Hmmmm is a mantra that vibrates at the heart centre, connecting the body back to its true nature, true centre.

Sitting in Easy pose with hands in prayer mudra at the heart centre.

Eyes are closed

'Humee' Cross the palms in front of each other at the heart centre

'Hum' Into prayer mudra.

'Brahm' Open arms to the side

'Hum' place hands on heart centre.

A suitable piece of music for this meditation is 'Humee Hum Brahm Hum' by Siri Sadhana Kaur available on iTunes. This particular song also has space for listening & reflection and is a very useful meditation to close a class or day with as it allows the brain to compute and reflect on the lesson.



Ujjayi Breath (Darth Vader Breath)

Ujjayi, often referred to as Ocean Breath or Darth Vader breath, is a bit more complex to teach, so save this for the older children.

This 'tones' the Vagus Nerve. When the Vagus is toned, the body is safe in the knowledge that the Sympathetic/parasympathetic nervous systems can be managed and controlled.

It warms the body and massages the internal organs giving the complete feeling of peace & calm.

To practice this breath

Imagine the breath is being used to fog up a mirror. Keep this breath going with lips together.

Any child or teen suffering with anxiety or (more extreme) depression will thank you for this invaluable tool.

Pranayama can be done at any time of the day and for any length of time. Conscious breathing allows a moment of mindfulness – a moment in the present – and I can't think of any greater gift than to give a child a one-way ticket to peaceful bliss.

So altogether now – big inhale – big exhale.

Relaxations

Relaxation Littlies

(depending on abilities of children this is for younger children ages 2 – 7)

Lie on your back with your legs straight and your arms by your sides.

Now this isn't sleep time, but you are going to close your eyes while I tell you a story.

So first take a big breath in through your nose, and out through your mouth, and again, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Now just pop your hands on your tummy and take a big breath in and feel your tummy filling up like a balloon, and breathe out. One more time, breathe in, tummy like a balloon, now breathe out.

Good, now rest your hands on the floor next to you as I am going to tell you about a very important job you have to do today.

Stay where you are with your eyes closed and imagine you are laying on the ground in a grassy field. Above you is blue sky with little white clouds floating by.

Flying around you are lots and lots of beautiful different coloured butterflies.

But there doesn't seem to be many flowers and food around for them at the moment, so I think that as you are such relaxed, calm, kind children that you would help feed them.

All you have to do is stay where you are, very still. Turn your hand so that it faces up imagine some magical butterfly food growing in your hand

(Pause - if you have a small class you could go round and touch each palm as if placing food in it)

Now be very still and quiet as the butterflies are very shy and timid. Let them come and feed.

That is amazing, wow.

Once the butterflies have got full tummies they whisper very softly in your ear 'thank you'.

As they fly away they look even brighter now and you can see all those beautiful colours.

You did that, you made them shine brighter. You can do that to anything and anyone, just by being kind.

You have done an amazing job today and helped those beautiful butterflies by being able to stay calm and relaxed - good job.

Think about other people you can be kind to today.

Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth.

And again, in through the nose and out through the mouth.

Now stay where you are but just wiggle your fingers and toes.

Now stretch your arms over your head and see how long you can make your body.

Bend your knees and hug them into your chest, like a ball.

Cricket rub - rub the bottoms of your feet on each other and the palms of your hands together.

Now hug your knees again and rock and roll all the way up.

Sit in Easy pose (cross legged) and rest your hands on your knees, take a deep breath in through your nose.

How do you feel?



Relaxation ages 8 upwards

Begin by lying on your back, cover yourself with a blanket if you wish. Legs are straight but floppy, feet roll away from each other. Arms rest by your sides, backs of the hands resting on the ground, palms face the ceiling, fingers & thumbs curl in naturally.

Head, neck and spine are all in a straight line, lightly close your eyes.

Begin to tune into your breath, breathing deeply in and out through your nose. Allowing the breath to travel all the way down into your tummy. When you breathe in your tummy lifts and fills, when you breathe out it falls back to flat. Continue this breathing for a few more breaths.

(pause)

Allow your breath to fall to its natural rhythm. Thoughts may come into your head, that is completely normal, just try not to get caught up in the thoughts. Let them pass by, if they are important they will come back later. When you notice your attention has drifted just bring it gently back to my voice.

I am going to mention parts of your body, as I do, try not to move that part of your body but just send all of your awareness and attention to that part.

Start with your feet. Notice your feet; the tops of your feet, the bottoms of your feet, all of your toes. Allow your feet to roll away from each other and relax further.

Move your attention up to your ankles, your calf muscles, notice your lovely knees and your super strong thighs. The front of the thigh, the back of the thigh, your hips & pelvis. Now let the whole of your lower body just melt into the earth.

Now bring your awareness to your hands. Backs of the hands resting on the floor. Take your attention to the palm of your hand, the centre of the palm. Your fingers & thumbs are relaxed and curled in slightly.

Your wrists are relaxed, your forearms, your elbows and your upper arms. Let your arms be heavy on the earth.

Become aware of your lower back, the middle part of your back and your upper back.

Relax your tummy. Notice its gentle rise and fall with your breath. Relax your chest keeping your heart open and your shoulders are wide and heavy on the mat. Relax the whole of your upper body and let it melt into the earth.

Relax your neck, your jaw, your lips teeth & tongue. There is a small gap between your back teeth and the tip of your tongue lightly touches the roof of your mouth. Can you notice your ears? Your cheeks. Let your sparkling eyes rest in the cushions of your eye sockets. Relax your forehead and the whole of your lovely smiling face is relaxed.

Relax the skin on your head, the hair on your head and allow the whole of your head to be heavy on the earth.

Relax your whole body, relax your whole body, relax your whole body, you are completely relaxed.

(pause)

Take your awareness and attention to your heart centre at the centre of your chest. At the centre of your heart is a tiny light, a sparkle or star. As you breathe in you are charging up your heart centre. This light can be any colour that comes to your mind and with every breath it shines brighter and begins to grow.

Feel the warmth this light generates in your heart centre, and as it gains strength and power it spreads up into your neck, into your head and charges up your glorious brain.

The light spreads across your shoulders, down your arms, into your hands and fingers with little light rays extending out of your fingers and thumbs.

With each breath your light is growing. It spreads down into your hips, your thighs, knees, lower legs, feet and toes with little rays of light shining out from your toes.

You are a pillar of light, your whole body shining brightly. You shine brightly.

From your heart centre you are able to shine your light outwards into the world. Your heart centre can light up the way for those in darkness and when you need the light, you can see it in others. The light in you reflects the light in others.

You can light up a room simply by walking into it. You can brighten someone's day with a smile. You have the power to lift up, not just yourself, but everyone who is lucky enough to cross paths with you today.

The light in you merges with the light in others, and it can cross towns, countries, oceans and even up into the universe.

You have the power and for a few moments, stay here, relax in this light, and just BE, exactly as you are, perfect in this moment.

(pause)

(after a few minutes or whenever you 'feel' is right, turn music down beginning to bring them back)

The light in you never dims. Occasionally you cannot feel it but it is always there.

Begin to deepen your breath. Slowly bringing your awareness back into the room. Begin to notice sounds around you, begin to notice sounds outside of the room.

Start to slowly wiggle your fingers and toes, always waking the body slowly from a deep relaxation, never shocking it awake, treat the body with care and respect.

Make small circles with your hands and feet, let the wrists and ankles crack and pop as much as they need to as they get ready for movement again.

Stretch your arms over head and have a lovely long delicious body stretch.

Bend your knees and bring them into your chest giving yourself a well-deserved loving hug. If it feels comfortable to, rock slightly on your back to massage your back muscles against the floor.

Cricket rub your hands and feet together. Rub the soles of the feet together and the palms of the hands. Hug the knees again and this time rock and roll 3 times all the way up and back down.

Come back into easy pose and rest your hands on your knees with palms open and just enjoy your breathing and the feeling of peace.

Notes