



**Title:** Deep Breathing

**Grade:** 7

**Career Development Model:**

Self-Awareness

**Nebraska Career Readiness Standards:**

- Uses critical thinking
- Manages personal career development
- Attends to personal & financial wellbeing

**Objective:**

- Students will use an effective relaxation technique to cope with stress.
- Students will recognize and document their own indicators of stress.

**Materials and Supplies Needed:**

N/A

**Class Instructions:**

Part 1

1. Facilitate a class discussion asking students the following questions about what they typically feel stressed out about every week:
  - a. What were you feeling stressed about?
  - b. How did you react to the stressful situation (behaviorally, physically, and psychologically)?
  - c. Were you able to make yourself feel less stressed? If so, how? How effective was this?
  - d. Can you think and communicate clearly while under stress?
2. Discuss with students that people may get stressed due to work or school demands. It can be hard to manage a task or effectively communicate with others while feeling stressed, so being able to manage stress is crucial.
3. Ask students if they ever feel stress due to school or work, and share examples. Do they ever notice their parents or siblings feeling stressed out because of work, school or college? How do they act when stressed? Encourage students to share examples.

4. Ask students what their breathing is like when they are under stress. It oftentimes will be fast and shallow or erratic.
5. Ask students what their breathing is like when they are relaxed, or about to fall asleep. It is most likely slow and deep.
6. Explain to students how by breathing deeply and slowly they may be able to help themselves feel more relaxed. Also, that you are going to teach them a deep breathing technique that they can use when they are feeling stressed out to help ease the stress and relax so that they can think more clearly.

## Part 2

Instruct students on the following breathing techniques:

1. Indicate that they may lie down or stay seated for the exercise, but should keep their spine straight.
2. Place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest. Close your eyes if you would like.
3. Slowly and deeply inhale through your nose with your mouth closed; you should feel your abdomen rise (like you are inflating a balloon). Only do this as much as comfortable, do not force your abdomen to rise. Your chest should move only a little with your abdomen. Try to focus only on your breathing.
4. Open your mouth slightly and exhale out slowly, making a slight blowing noise. Your abdomen should fall (like a balloon deflating).
5. Continue deep breathing and as you get more comfortable with this try to make your exhale last longer than your inhale. Try to inhale counting to five and exhale, counting to eight.
6. You can continue this for 3-5 minutes.

7. Explain to students that they can do this activity for 5-10 minutes at a time. When in a stressful situation and there is not much time to do the deep breathing exercise, even one minute can be beneficial.

### Part 3

1. Ask students to share how they are feeling after the breathing exercise is complete. Do they feel more relaxed?
2. If students think this exercise is helpful, ask them in what kinds of situations they think they could use this? Ask for examples.

### Credits/Sources:



"Making my Future Work: A College and Career Readiness Program", U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

<https://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/mmfw/making-my-future-work-0>