



The Hoberman sphere mindfulness activity

A Hoberman sphere, or breathing ball, can help teach mindful breathing. It can be used to demonstrate how the lungs fill with air and expand on the in-breathe and then contract on with the out breath. It also serves as a focus, or an anchor, for mindful breathing.

As you slowly expands the sphere, have students inhale deeply and slowly through the nose and from the belly. Stop for a moment and pause, emulating the short, natural pause that happens at the top — and bottom — of each healthy breath. As you slowly contract the sphere, ask everyone to exhale through the nose slowly.

THREE EXERCISES TO TRY

Demonstrate lungs - Explain how the lungs expand and contract with the inhale and the exhale, and how mindful, focused breathing can help us stay calm.

Self-regulation - Leave the breathing ball in a quiet area of your classroom, on a desk or table for students to use on their own. It is an engaging tool for self-regulation once kids know how to use it.

Follow the ball - Open and close the ball at a pace that emulates students' natural breathing cycle. A steady four-count inhale, slight pause and four-count exhale is recommended as a cycle. Students age 6-11 should strive for 8-9 cycles in a minute; students age 12 and older should strive for 6-7 cycles in a minute.

Mindfulness practices help students train their attention by feeling the sensations of the breath. Through repeated practice, students will be able to focus better and be more aware of the quality of their attention.

Watch the Hoberman sphere video on the Children's Wisconsin YouTube channel.

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