

Breathing Everyday

Drawing Your Breath Lines



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Time Needed: 20-30 minutes

Arts Focus: Visual Art

Age Range: 5-8

Mini-Lesson Description:

Learners will learn how to practice mindfulness skills for calm and focus by drawing breathing patterns using crayons and watercolors. Mindfulness and drawing can be an important part of overcoming anxiety and healing from trauma.

Key Concepts:

Mindfulness; Breathing; Inhale; Exhale; Drawing; Lines; Coloring; Wax; Resist.

Materials Needed/Prep:

- Large sheet(s) of paper (for longer breaths)
- White cardstock paper (for the use with watercolors)
- Crayons or any drawing medium (blue, turquoise, white, yellow are good colors for this exercise)
- Watercolors (as a substitute for watercolors you can mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water with food coloring)
- Cup of water
- Paintbrush
- *optional*: Calm relaxing music; Salt; Plastic table cover

Step-by-Step:

MINDFULNESS and BREATHING

1. Explain to the learner(s) that breathing and drawing can be powerful tools for calming down when we are upset, or finding focus when we feel distracted or overwhelmed.
2. Discuss the word, "Mindfulness". It means paying full attention to something. It means slowing down to really notice what you're doing. Being mindful is the opposite of rushing or multitasking. When you're mindful, you're taking your time.
3. Demonstrate this 5-Finger breathing exercise and notice the long and calm breaths:
 - With one hand use the pointer finger to outline the open fingers of the other hand. Show learner(s) how to inhale tracing up each finger and exhale following each finger down. Breathing up and down with five fingers is a quick way to calm the body and mind.

DRAWING and BREATHING

4. Set up some large paper on a clear table for the learner(s) and if you can, play some calming music.
5. Place a crayon on the large paper.
6. Take a moment to notice your own breathing and have the learner(s) do the same.
7. Visualize your breath as a line going up and down like the 5 Finger breathing exercise.
8. Try to draw your breath as a line going up and down on the paper in any way that makes sense to each learner.
9. Spend a few minutes playing with different lines and colors while noticing your breath.
10. Breathe fast and then slow while your drawing and notice the difference.
11. Get a new piece of paper. Focus on taking deep, slow breaths and draw lines representing calm, deep breaths.
12. Continue for a few minutes and relax into the calming sensation of breathing lines.
13. Share your drawing together! How are they the same? How are they different?

Variations and Next Steps:

- Using the cardstock, draw your breathing lines using crayons as we did in the steps above.
- Once you fill up a page with breathing lines, brush your whole paper with a thick layer of water.
- Paint using watercolors, you'll notice that the crayons will block your watercolor. This technique is called Wax Resist.
- *Optional*: Sprinkle salt in some areas while the paper is wet; this will crystalize the paint and makes a cool effect.

Watch a video of this Creative Start Mini-Lesson and find more at: <https://www.arts.wa.gov/creative-start/>