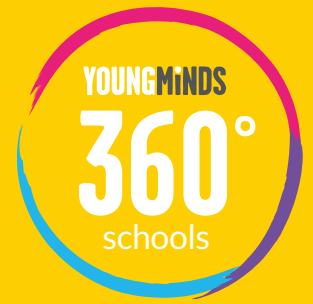


Self-soothing activities



These 6 mindfulness activities can be used to aid reflection and encourage you to take time out for yourself to relax and recharge. This can be shared between colleagues and pupils to support them when they need a bit of reflection / time out.

1. Mindful Listening



Sit comfortably on a chair and gently close your eyes. Bring your awareness to the sounds around you. Allow the sounds to come and go, without labelling them and hanging onto them. Sit for as long as you feel comfortable and what your time will allow. When ready, slowly open your eyes.

2. Mindful Senses



On your way home, find one pleasant event to become aware of, e.g the sound of birdsong, noticing a tree or cloud in the sky, the taste of some food. Use this as an opportunity to develop your awareness of the thoughts, feelings and body sensations that arise with pleasant experiences, to know it as fully and clearly as you can, and not let the moment slip by in unawareness. If you feel comfortable – share this with a colleague at work the next day.

3. Mindful Standing



Stand with your feet hip width apart and gently close your eyes. Gently rock your weight, feeling how your body responds and noticing where you are comfortable. Carefully move your weight onto one foot and slowly peel the other foot off the floor. If you can, balance there for a few moments. When you are ready to put your foot back down and repeat onto the other foot. Finally, become aware again of where your weight is falling. Slowly open your eyes.

Self-soothing activities



4. Mindful Looking



Sit comfortably on a chair with your back straight and your feet planted on the floor. If you are comfortable, close your eyes, and pick up an everyday object close to you. Notice how you feel about the object. Gently open your eyes and notice its size, shape, colour, texture, shine. Very slowly, turn the object over your palm, touch the object with your other hand and notice the feel. What new things do you notice about this familiar object?

5. Mindful Activity



Choose a routine activity to be especially mindful of (e.g. brushing teeth, washing dishes, taking a shower, taking out the rubbish). Try to make a deliberate effort to cultivate moment-to-moment awareness of what you are doing.

6. Mindful Breathing



Sit in a comfortable position and let your shoulders drop and your hands rest in your lap. Bring your awareness to your body and notice where your attention goes. Gather this awareness and focus on the sensations of the breath in the torso. Notice the sensations of each in breath and each out breath. Become more aware, letting it simply be. When you notice the attention has wandered from the breath, pause to acknowledge the movement of the mind, then simply return it to the breath.

Mindfulness is a great way to stay calm at the beginning of the new school year. There are also lots of great videos and audio clips online and you can download free apps to help guide you through breathing techniques and meditation. We like to use [Headspace](#) and [Calm](#).