

## Five Fun Breathing Exercises For Kids: IDEAS & ADVICE 6TH MARCH 2013 BY: JAIME

When you learn that your breath is linked to your state, you have it in your power to keep a steady head whenever you need. 'Take a deep breath' is wonderful and simple wisdom, but it can be harder than you think when you are feeling a little! Here are five simple and fun breathing techniques which help kids learn how their breath connects with how they feel:

- 1. Hot Air Balloon:** Sitting in a comfortable cross-legged position, start by cupping your hands round your mouth. Take a deep breath in through your nose and slowly start to blow out through your mouth, growing your hands outwards in time with your exhale as if you are blowing up an enormous hot air balloon. Once your balloon is as big as it can be (and you've finished your exhale), breath normally as you sway gently from side to side admiring your big beautiful hot air balloon as it soars through the sky. This long deep exhalation as you blow up your hot air balloon has a relaxing effect and the image is incredibly vivid for kids' imaginations.
- 2. Dragon Fire Breaths:** Interlace the fingers underneath the chin. Inhale and lift the elbows up to frame the face. Exhale, lifting the head up making a whispered 'hah' sound towards the sky, like a dragon breathing fire. At the same time, lower the elbows back down to meet at the bottom again by the end of the 'hah' exhale. This breath technique builds strength and heat within so is a good energizer. It helps us feel brave when we might be nervous or pepped up when we're a bit tired.
- 3. Tumble Dryer:** Sitting in cross-legged position, point your index fingers towards each other and position them so your left finger is pointing to the right and your right finger is pointing to the left overlapping a bit in front of your mouth and blow as you spin your fingers round each other, making a lovely long exhalation and a satisfying swishy sound. This works well after washing machine, which involves sitting in a cross-legged position, interlacing your fingers behind your head and twisting from your core side to side going "wishy washy wishy washy" as you twist each way.
- 4. Tongue Tube:** Some people can curl the sides of their tongue up, others can't... it's a genetic thing! If you can, curl up the sides and make your tongue into a tube or straw. Then with your tube-like tongue sticking out a little bit, inhale and suck the air in over your tongue. Exhale slowly through your nose. This has a wonderful cooling effect and refreshes the throat. Very cleansing! If you can't do the curling thing with the sides of your tongue, you can instead get all the same benefits of the refreshing breath by doing a big toothy grin and sucking in the air sharply.
- 5. Bumble Bee Breaths:** Known as Bhramari in Pranayama practice. Pranayama being the control of the breath in Yoga. Sitting comfortably with your legs crossed, breath in through your nose, then with fingers in your ears hum out your exhalation. The lovely comforting resonance of this has a calming effect and done with eyes closed can make it even more peaceful.

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