

What is it?

Focus 5 is a set of exercises that provides you with skills to minimize distraction and develop greater focus for learning. Each exercise can be done in under five minutes.

Why do Focus 5 exercises?

None of us can learn if we can't pay attention to what we read or to what teachers or students are saying. Even when we are sitting in a classroom, our minds may be far away, thinking about something that happened the night before or drifting into thoughts about what will happen after school or on the weekend. Sometimes we may have trouble tuning out distractions, like our friends or our phones. We may not even be thinking of a specific thing but just have trouble focusing.

Focus 5 exercises give you a chance to calm your thoughts so you can have better control over your attention. Practicing these exercises daily, both in and out of school, can lead to better focus, as well as feelings of calmness and relaxation.

How do I use Focus 5?

Simply read through the exercise of your choice, either as a daily routine or when you are anxious or stressed. Don't rush through the exercise; give yourself time to breathe and relax.

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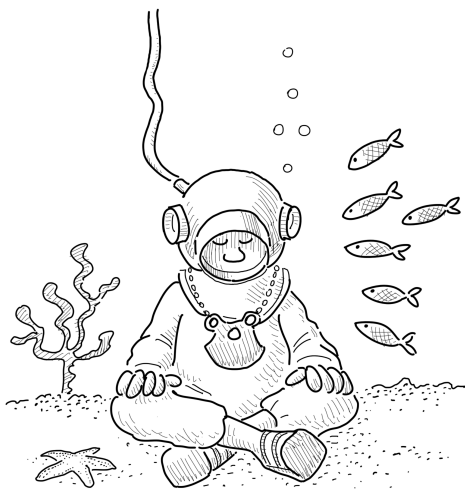
serpmedia.org/focus5

EXERCISE 1: BREATHE DEEP



PAUSE AFTER READING EACH PHRASE ALOUD

- * Sit up tall in your chair (or stand) with your feet flat on the floor. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes to tune out distractions...
Take a deep breath in, letting go of any tension as you breathe out...
Slowly relax your neck...and your shoulders...
Now relax your arms...and your hands...
Let go of any tension you may be feeling in any part of your body.
- * Breathe in slowly through your nose like you're smelling hot chocolate, filling your lungs with air...
Let the breath go, slowly exhaling out your mouth like you are cooling it off...
Take (5-10) more breaths, allowing each breath to become slower and deeper than the one before.
- * Now shift your breathing so that you breathe in *and out* of your nose...
Keep following your breath as it enters through your nose and fills up your lungs...
Feel your lungs and diaphragm expand...
Follow your breath as you exhale and your lungs deflate.
- * Keep breathing calmly and deeply for a few more moments.
- * Now take 5 deep breaths at your own speed...
When you're ready, slowly open your eyes.



END

EXERCISE 2: LET IT GO

PAUSE AFTER READING EACH PHRASE ALOUD

- * Sit up tall in your chair (or stand) with your feet flat on the floor. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes to tune out distractions...
Take a deep breath in, letting go of any tension as you breathe out...
Slowly relax your neck...and your shoulders...
Now relax your arms...and your hands...
Let go of any tension you may be feeling in any part of your body.
- * Breathe in slowly, inhaling deeply through your nose and filling your lungs with air...
Now slowly exhale through your nose...
Allow each breath to become slower and deeper than the one before.
- * Take a deep breath in and completely fill your lungs with air...
When they feel full, see if you can draw in just a little more air...
Now tuck your chin into your chest and hold your breath for a count of 4: 1...2...3...4...
Slowly exhale, lifting your chin back to its normal position.
- * Begin again, inhaling deeply...
Tuck your chin and hold your breath: 1...2...3...4...
Exhale out and slowly lift your chin.
- * Let's do this (5-10) more times...
When you're ready, slowly open your eyes.



END

EXERCISE 3: MIND IN MOTION



PAUSE AFTER READING EACH PHRASE ALOUD

- * Find a space where you can stand and stretch your arms out fully without touching someone else...
If you feel comfortable, close your eyes.
- * Now let your shoulders relax down and let your arms dangle at your sides...
Feel your feet planted firmly on the ground, as if they have roots holding you in place...
Your knees should be unlocked and slightly bent.
- * Now turn your attention to your breath; inhaling and exhaling slowly and fully 3 times...
Now, we are going to move our arms in sync with our breath. Breathe in slowly through your nose as you gently raise your arms to shoulder height...
Once you have your arms straight out in front of you, hold your breath for a count of 3: 1...2...3...
Now slowly exhale and lower your arms back to your sides.
- * Let's do that (5-10) more times, keeping your wrists and elbows relaxed as you lift and lower your arms...
Inhale, raising your arms...hold for a count of 3...
Exhale, lowering the arms to starting position.
- * Once you've finished, take a moment to stand still and notice how your arms and hands feel...
Take 3 deep breaths at your own speed...
When you're ready, open your eyes.



END

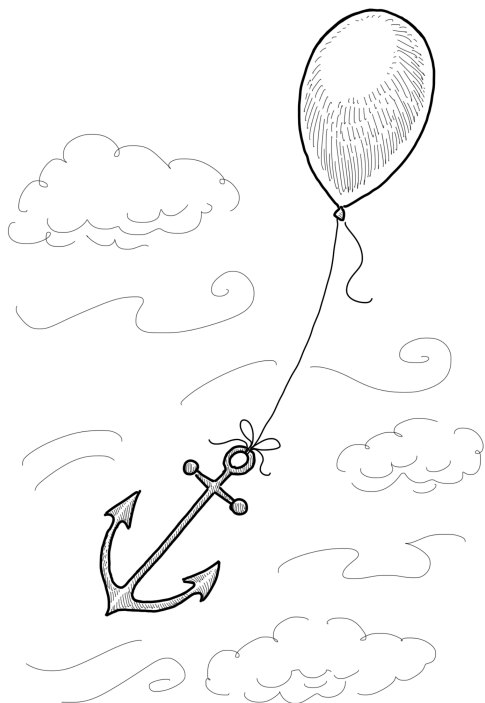
EXERCISE 4:

ANCHOR OF AIR



PAUSE AFTER READING EACH PHRASE ALOUD

- * Sit up tall with your feet flat on the floor. If you are comfortable doing so, close your eyes...
Relax your arms and legs completely, allowing your body to feel heavy.
- * Breathe in slowly through your nose...
Then breathe out slowly through your nose...
Continue to breathe deeply, inhaling and exhaling completely.
- * As you breathe, thoughts will come into your head, taking your attention somewhere else...
Use your breath as your anchor, pulling your attention back to this moment. (30–60 seconds)
- * Your mind may be drifting to things that you're excited about or worried about...
Return to your anchoring breath, inhaling and exhaling fully, reminding yourself that you are here in this room and nowhere else. (30–60 seconds)
- * Now take 5 more anchoring breaths, pausing after each exhale to feel the calm before the next inhale...
When you're ready, open your eyes.



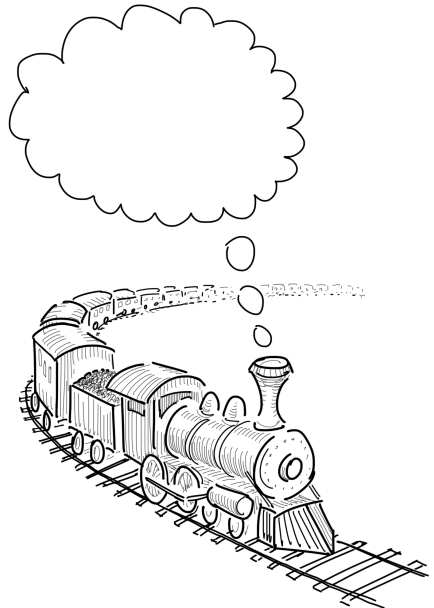
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EXERCISE 5: TRAIN OF THOUGHT



PAUSE AFTER READING EACH PHRASE ALOUD

- * Sit up tall in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes to tune out distractions...
Take a deep breath in, letting go of any tension as you breathe out...
Slowly relax your neck...and your shoulders...
Now relax your arms...and your hands...
Let go of any tension you may be feeling in any part of your body.
- * Breathe in slowly through your nose as if you're smelling fresh bread...then exhale slowly...
Let's do this 5 more times, breathing in deeply and exhaling out fully.
- * Continue to focus on your inhales and exhales...
As you breathe, you may notice your attention drifting to thoughts that come into your head, distracting you from your breath...
Treat these thoughts like trains coming into a station... simply let them pass through, returning your attention to your breath.
- * Continue to breathe deeply, noticing the trains of thought come and go...always returning attention to your breath.
- * Now take 3 deep breaths...
When you're ready, open your eyes.



END

EXERCISE 6: TIGHT AND LOOSE



PAUSE AFTER READING EACH PHRASE ALOUD

- * Sit up tall in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes to tune out distractions...

Take a deep breath in, letting go of any tension as you breathe out...

Slowly relax your neck...and your shoulders...

Now relax your arms...and your hands...

Let go of any tension you may be feeling in any part of your body.

- * Now start to notice the feeling of your body pushing against the chair and the chair pushing back on you...

Allow your body to feel heavy on the chair.

- * Notice the feeling of your lungs expanding and contracting with each breath...

Notice your diaphragm expanding and contracting with each inhale and each exhale...

Slowly move your attention down your legs...to your ankles...and your feet...

Relax every part of your body and just rest in your chair.

- * Now, as you take a deep breath in, clench your hands tightly into fists...

Draw in a little more air and squeeze your hands even tighter. Hold it for 1...2...3...

Now exhale all of your air and let your hands relax completely...

Let's do this (5-10) more times. Take a deep breath in as you clench your hands...

Draw in some more air and squeeze them tighter. Hold it...then exhale, letting the breath go and allowing your hands to relax.

- * Continue to sit quietly and calmly for a few moments...

Allow your body to relax...

Slowly, open your eyes.



END

EXERCISE 7: GRATITUDE



PAUSE AFTER READING EACH PHRASE ALOUD

- * Sit up tall in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes to tune out distractions...
Slowly inhale through your nose...then exhale out your nose...
Breathe calmly like this for (5-10) breaths.
- * Now, start to think of a time when someone did something for you out of the kindness of their heart, just to help you out. Take a moment to really picture this person in your mind.
- * Try to remember and recreate this moment fully in your mind. What was going on? What did they do?
How did this make you feel?
Allow yourself to notice any thoughts or emotions that start to come up. Just sit with these for a moment.
- * Now think about a time when you did something helpful or kind for someone else...
Imagine the person...
Vividly remember what it felt like to help this person, recreating this moment in your mind...
Notice how your body feels...
Notice your thoughts and your emotions.
- * Continue to imagine this situation in your mind. All the while, breathe calmly in and out through your nose...
- * Slowly, open your eyes.

END

