

Breathing Techniques

Winding down for bed can be a challenge for all of us. Some children can really struggle to calm their minds and prepare for a good night's sleep. These simple breathing techniques can be a good way to focus their attention on something which can be calming. Breathing techniques are also a great coping strategy for the future.

There are a range of different breathing techniques to try so have an experiment and find which ones work best for you and your child. There are a few key things to think about when trying these techniques in order to use them effectively to help your child prepare for sleep.

- Make sure they are somewhere comfortable- bed is best as they can drift off straight to sleep.
- Prepare the room around them for sleep so they don't need to get out of bed.
- Encourage them to have a small drink of water before you start.
- They can close their eyes and remind them to try to focus on their breathing. Some techniques may involve movement or your child may want to use their finger to trace round the shapes so they can keep them open for these techniques.
- Use a quiet, slow and calming voice to guide them through.



We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.

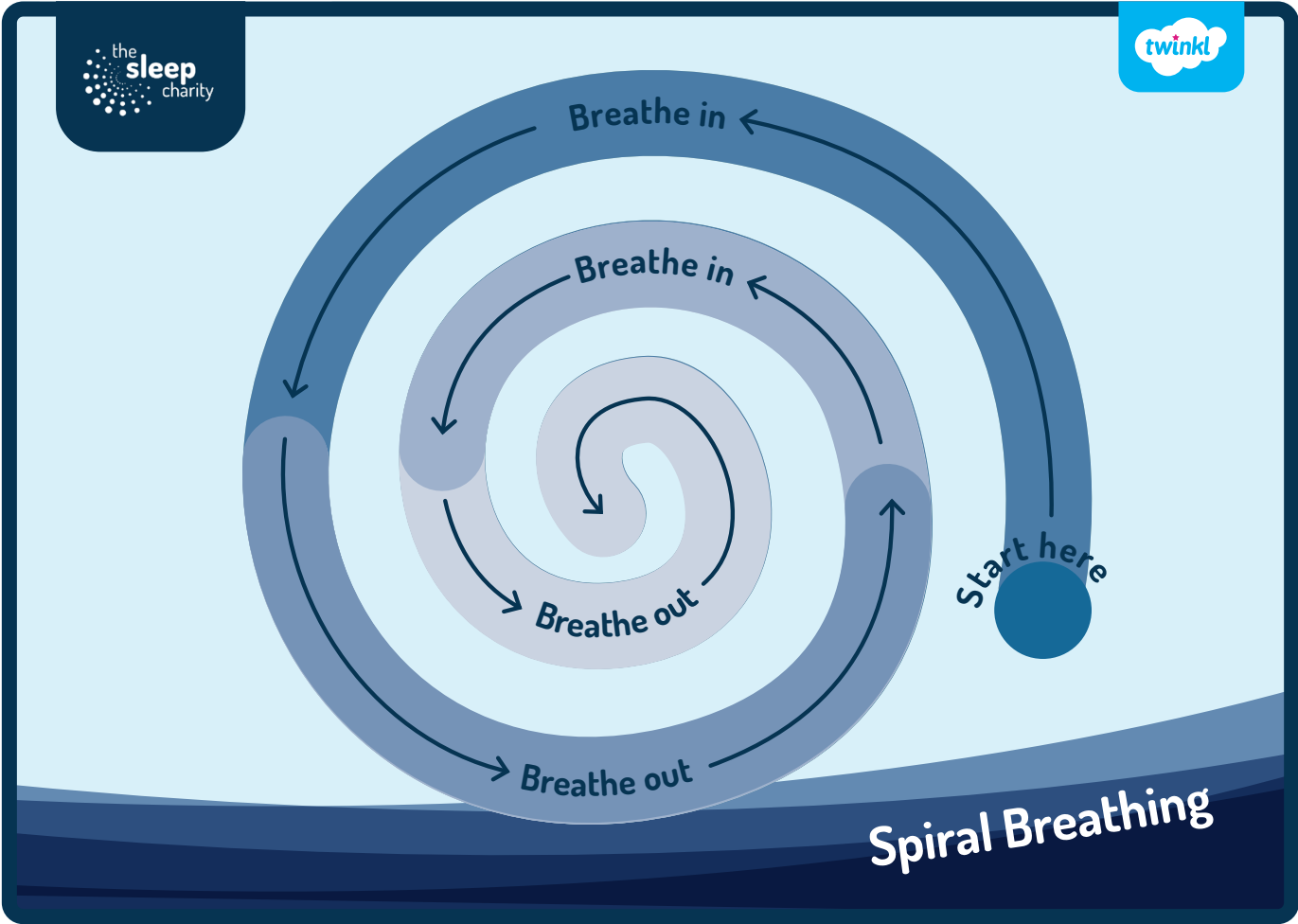
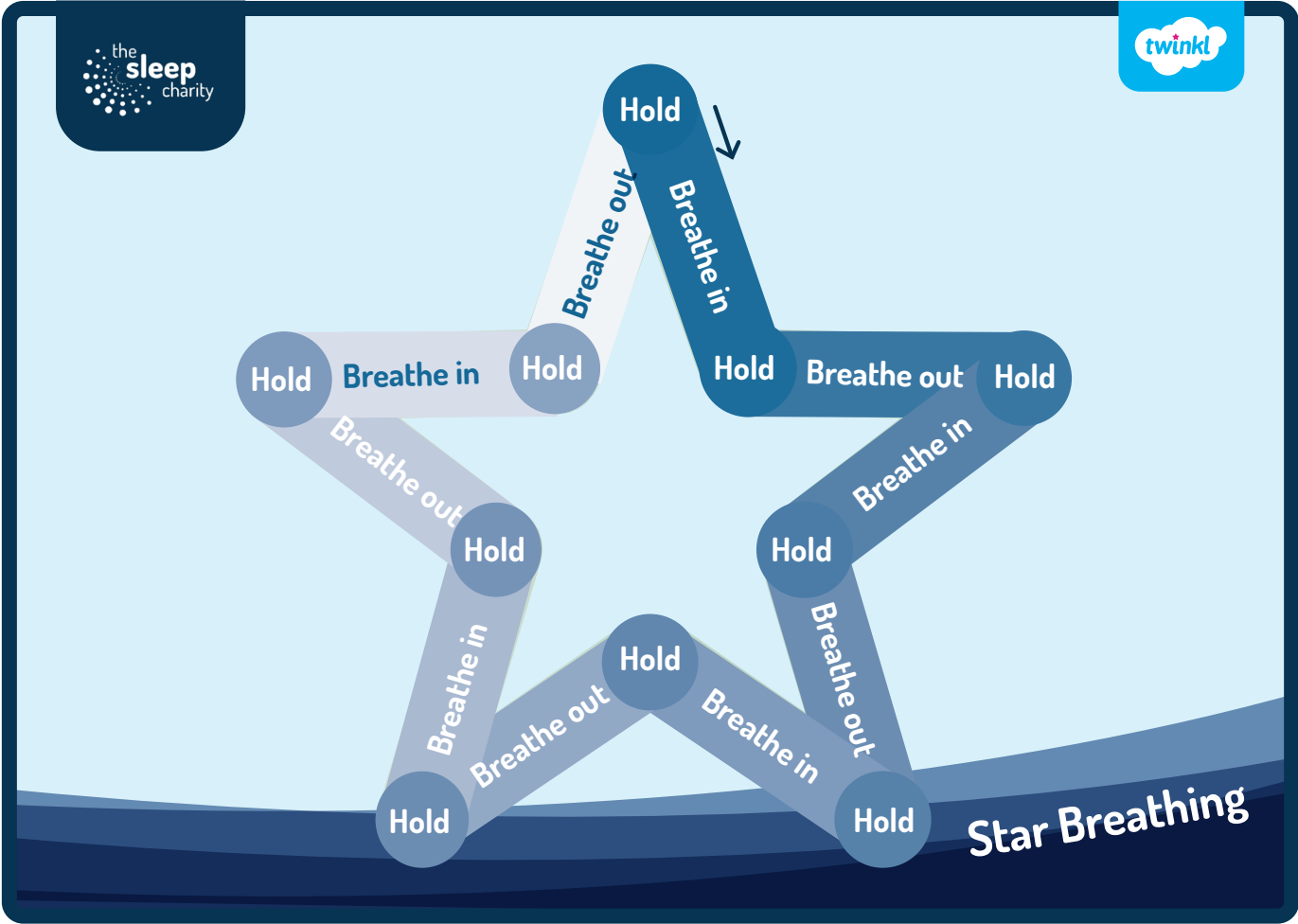
Balloon Belly Breath

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
2. Take a couple of natural breaths.
3. Breathe in and blow out your tummy. Your belly is like a balloon filling with air.
4. As you breathe out, your belly will go back down as there's no air left.
5. Repeat, being careful not to push your belly out too much.

Warm Drink Breath

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
2. Imagine you are holding a cup of warm drink in your hands. This can be hot chocolate or whatever you prefer.
3. Bring your cupped hands towards your face.
4. Breathe in through your nose and imagine what your drink smells like.
5. As you breathe out, imagine gently blowing the steam.
6. Repeat.
7. If you have a grown-up to help you, you could try doing this with a warm drink in your hands.

You can either imagine the picture in your head, or use your finger to trace along the outline of the shape.



Some children can find counting and breathing can help them focus and calm their minds. Here are a few to try:

Box Breathing

Younger children might find holding their breath difficult so you decide whether to try it with your child.

1. Close your eyes and take a deep breath out.
2. Slowly breathe in, counting to four in your head.
3. Pause at the end of your in-breath and count to four.
4. Breathe out slowly, counting to four.
5. Repeat this cycle.
6. It can be helpful to imagine the outline of a square for each section of your breath.



4-7-8

Again, this can be a simple inhale and exhale, or you can add a third step in the middle with a breath hold.

1. Close your eyes and breathe out.
2. Inhale for the count of four.
3. Slowly breathe out to the count of eight.
4. Repeat like this.
5. Or, when you have inhaled, hold the breath for seven.
6. Then release the breath slowly for a count of 8.



1, 2, 3, 4, 5

This breath is a nice one with a range of ages as there is no breath hold and you can stop at any count.

1. Close your eyes and breathe out.
2. Breathe in for one count and out for one count.
3. Breathe in and count to two. Breathe out and count to two.
4. Breathe in and count to three. Breathe out and count to three.
5. Breathe in and count to four. Breathe out and count to four.
6. Breathe in and count to five. Breathe out and count to five.
7. Don't forget you can stop at any point.
8. If your child would like, they can continue counting down.

Relax your Muscles

As you breathe, think about clenching the muscles in each part of your body and then releasing and relaxing them. Follow the steps below:

1. Scrunch up your face as tight as you can. Then relax.
2. Pause for a few breaths.
3. Squeeze your shoulders up to your ears. Then relax.
4. Pause for a few breaths.
5. Clench your arms all the way to your fists. Then relax.
6. Pause for a few breaths.
7. Tighten your bottom muscles and pull in your tummy. Then relax.
8. Pause for a few breaths.
9. Tighten the muscles in your legs. Then relax.
10. Pause for a few breaths.
11. Curl your toes as tight as you can. Then relax.
12. Pause for a few breaths.

Yoga Poses and Breathing

Have a go at these yoga poses and breathe deeply throughout. Hold each one for 5 - 10 breaths.

- Lie on your back next to a wall. Shuffle your bottom close to the wall and bring your legs so they are up the wall. Adjust until you are comfy, then take some deep breaths.
- Come to a kneeling position, then bring your knees wide. Bring your chest towards the floor and reach your arms out ahead of you. Bring your forehead to the floor or a cushion and take some deep breaths.
- Lie on your back and bring the soles of your feet to the floor so your knees are together pointing up to the sky. As you breath, rock your knees from side to side slowly. Place your arms wherever feels comfortable.
- Come to your hands and knees. As you breathe in, drop your tummy button towards the floor and look up. As you breathe out, arch your back up towards the sky and look between your legs.