

# Introduction to Mindfulness

In China, the written symbol for mindfulness translates as 'heart in the present'. That is why mindfulness is sometimes referred to as 'Heartfulness'

**Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to whatever is happening, as it is happening – both inside us and in our surroundings.** It means being more aware of our thoughts as we are thinking them, our body sensations as we are sensing them and our feelings as we are feeling them. Simply put, we could say that mindfulness is *Being Aware, Right Here, Right Now.*

The mindfulness activities in *Bizzy Breaks* have accompanying scripts to guide you in using them with your class. The language can be amended for different age groups depending on the abilities and interests within your class.

## Benefits can include:

- ☆ Increased focus and attention
- ☆ Stress reduction
- ☆ Decreased anxiety
- ☆ Emotional balance
- ☆ Resilience
- ☆ Calmness



## Teaching Tips

- 1 **NOTICE:** Hang a **sign** on the classroom door before your mindfulness practice to let visitors know not to disturb the class.
- 2 **ATMOSPHERE:** Background **music** is always **optional**. It may help at times to cultivate a mindful mood. Other times it may be too distracting. Use your own judgement, depending on the needs of your class on any given day.
- 3 **SIGNAL:** A **bell or chime** can be used to signal the beginning and end of the practice. This is also optional.
- 4 **MIND:** Reassure pupils that it is normal for the mind to get distracted and **wander off** during mindfulness practice. Encourage them to be patient and just keep bringing their mind back to the practice each time it wanders off.

- 5 **BODY:** There are three main **postures** for the mindfulness activities (see 'Mindfulness Postures' below). These postures help pupils to tune into their bodies in a purposeful way. Focusing on the body can be an 'anchor' to help us to stay present in the moment.
- 6 **BREATH:** Focusing on the **breath** is another 'anchor' that can help to steady us in the present moment. Our lungs work best when we breathe in through the nose and out through the nose (mouth closed). It is particularly effective when teaching 'belly breathing'. Head colds, specific lung conditions etc. may prevent pupils breathing this way. In that case, reassure pupils to just breathe in their usual way.
- 7 **PAUSES:** Pauses are indicated within the scripts (...). As you become more familiar with the practice you are encouraged to use your own judgement in terms of where, when and for how long to pause. The **length** of pauses can be extended as pupils become more comfortable and familiar with mindfulness practice.
- 8 **SMILING:** The act of smiling sends a message to the brain resulting in a feel-good chemical response in the body. This aids in lowering heart rate and helps us relax and feel good. We can activate this '**feel-good response**' by simply incorporating smiling into the mindfulness practice.
- 9 **CLOSING:** When coming to the end of a practice, it can help with transitioning to say something like "*Now you are ready to continue with your day*" or "*you can bring this calmness to every moment of your day*". Prompt reflection on the experience and allow a few moments for pupils to re-adjust before returning to classwork.

## Mindfulness Postures

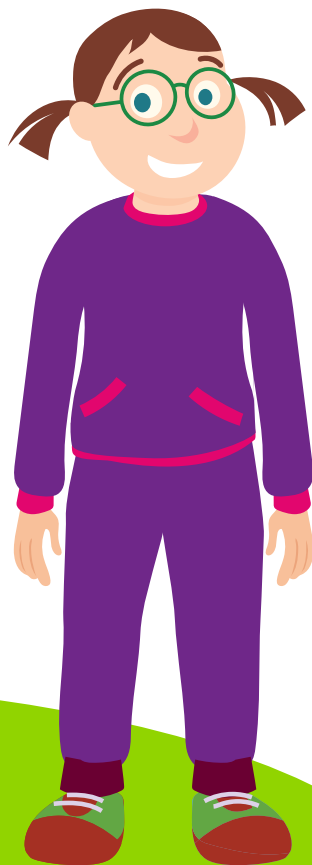
There are three main postures for the mindfulness activities; **Standing Mountain**, **Sitting Mountain** and **Lying Down Mountain**. These are illustrated on the following pages. Each activity states a recommended posture, but many of the practices can be done in any of the three positions.

# Mindfulness

## Posture

## *Standing Mountain*

- 1 We are going to stand strong like a mountain. Stand up straight and tall, with feet apart (about hip distance)...
- 2 Shift your weight to the back of your feet (heels), try to wiggle your toes. Keep your knees nice and soft, not fully straightened out...
- 3 Feeling strong and steady like a mountain, relax your neck and head.
- 4 Taking a breath in, roll your shoulders back and down, then relax your shoulders...and your arms.
- 5 Let your arms hang by your sides, hands nice and soft.
- 6 Now soften (relax) your eyes... breathe normally... and smile.



# Mindfulness

## Posture

## *Sitting Mountain*

- 1 We are going to sit straight and tall like a mountain...
- 2 Shift your bum forward, away from the back of the chair.
- 3 Place your feet flat on the floor, with knees bent, hip distance apart.
- 4 Feel your weight being supported by your bottom. You should be able to wiggle your toes, try to give them a wiggle...
- 5 Shake your arms and hands out gently by your sides for a few seconds...now gently bring them to rest on your lap...
- 6 Soften (relax) your head and shoulders...
- 7 Feeling steady and strong like a mountain, soften (relax) your eyes... breathe normally... and smile.



# Mindfulness Posture

## *Lying Down Mountain*

- 1 We are going to lie down on our backs, like the strong base of a mountain...
- 2 Lie on your back, looking up at the ceiling, legs straight and arms by your sides, close to your body.
- 3 Wiggle your fingers gently for a few seconds... then let your hands relax, touching the floor...
- 4 Feel the different parts of your body as they touch the floor; your head... your shoulders... back...your bottom.. arms... legs...
- 5 Wiggle your toes gently... then let your feet fall out to each side...
- 6 Soften (relax) your eyes (close your eyes, if that's comfortable)... be still... feeling steady and strong like the base of a mountain....breathe normally and smile.





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**SENIOR  
INFANTS**

**FIRST  
CLASS**

**JUNIOR  
INFANTS**



## Finger Surf

- ☆ Teacher guides pupils through the following mindfulness practice, using the script below.
- ☆ Pupils begin in **Sitting Mountain** posture.



Holding up the left hand with palm facing you, spread your fingers out like a starfish. Look at the middle of your starfish hand. Listen to your breathing, coming in... and going out... all by itself

Shhh... (*whispering*) When you are still and quiet, you can hear your body breathing (*pause to allow pupils to focus on breathing*).

Put Peter Pointer (*index finger*) from your other hand beside the thumb of your starfish hand (*demonstrate placing pointed index finger at the edge of the wrist under the thumb*).

Breathing in, Peter Pointer moves up the side of the thumb to the very top, nice and slowly, just like a feather. Barely touching the skin... like a gentle tickle...

When Peter Pointer is at the top of the thumb, we breathe out while he goes down the other side of the thumb, nice and slowly...gently like a feather...

Now let's keep him going, taking a breath in as he moves slowly and gently up the edge of the finger... then breathing out as he moves down the other edge, barely touching the skin...

- ☆ Continue across all fingers, breathing in when moving the index finger up and breathing out when moving it down.
- ☆ At the end of the pinky finger, reverse the direction and continue moving in the same way, all the way back to the thumb.
- ☆ Repeat on the other hand.
- ☆ To finish, allow hands rest on the lap. Pause, breathe normally and smile.



## Teddy Tap

- ☆ Teacher guides pupils through the following mindfulness practice, using the script below.
- ☆ Pupils begin by lying on their backs on the floor (**Lying-down Mountain** posture). If space does not allow for lying down while maintaining physical distancing, start in **Sitting Mountain** posture.

### Equipment:

A teddy for each pupil (alternatively, use a picture of a teddy\* or imagination).

\*available in accompanying online resources

Put Teddy on your tummy, lying down like you, with belly facing the sky.

Take a moment to listen to the music and the sounds around us... breathing in... and out... When we tap the different parts of our bodies, we wake them up, like we have magic dust on our fingertips. Let's use that magic now on Teddy.

Let's start by tapping Teddy's feet gently with our fingertips, a few little taps... waking his feet up.... Now wiggle your own toes gently... feel your toes waking up. Just hold Teddy now and feel him moving up and down on your tummy as you breathe... Now, gently tap Teddy's legs a few times... His legs feel awake and so do yours... feel your legs waking up... (*little pause*) And back now to holding Teddy, with your arms around him... As you breathe, feel him moving on your tummy, up... and down...

Next, tap Teddy's tummy, just little tiny taps... feel that tapping going through to your own tummy... feel your tummy waking up... listen for any sounds coming from your tummy.. (*little pause*)

And back now to holding Teddy; feel him moving up and down on your tummy as you breathe... This time tap Teddy gently up and down his arms... he loves this... and now your own hands and arms are beginning to feel nice and tingly and awake... A little rest now... holding Teddy again and feeling him moving up and down as you breathe... (*little pause*)

Be extra gentle for this one; tap Teddy gently on the top of his head and now tap your own head gently a few times... Back to Teddy, very gently tap his forehead... now tap your own forehead gently

Back to Teddy, very gently tap his cheeks... now tap your own cheeks gently...

And back again to Teddy, very gently tap his chin... now tap your own chin gently... Now just hold Teddy and feel him moving up and down on your tummy as you breathe... (*little pause*)

Time to put Teddy down on the floor beside us... roll over on to your right side (*point to the correct side*). Slowly come back up to Sitting Mountain on the floor and cross your legs. Pause, breathe normally and smile.



## Learning across the Curriculum

### Finger Surf

This Bizzy Break can be used as a starting point to explore **feelings and emotions**. You might like to try the below activities.

#### Visual Arts

**Strand:** Paint and colour  
**Strand Unit:** Looking and responding

- Creating a whole-class 'happy hand' collage (trace outline of hands and decorate with things that make us happy).

#### SPHE

**Strand:** Myself  
**Strand Unit:** Growing and changing

- Acting out and guessing different emotions through charades.

### Teddy Tap

This Bizzy Break can be used as a starting point to explore **parts of the body**. You might like to try the below activities.

#### Science

**Strand:** Living things  
**Strand Unit:** Myself

- Identifying parts of the body through stories, images or song.

#### SPHE

**Strand:** Myself  
**Strand Unit:** Growing and changing

- Discussing ways to calm our minds when we are worried or upset.



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## Precious Pearl

- ☆ Before beginning this practice, teacher explains what a clam is and uses hands to demonstrate the action of a clam shell opening and closing, keeping the edge of the palms and little fingers together.
- ☆ Teacher guides pupils through the following mindfulness practice using the script below.
- ☆ Pupils start in **Sitting Mountain** posture.

Bring both of your hands out in front of your body. Bend the elbows, arms close by the sides, finger and thumb tips together, like a clam that's closed.

Now soften your eyes, listen to your body breathing... not trying to change it in any way... just letting it be as it is right now... *(pause)*

Breathing in we press the fingers and thumbs together gently...

Breathing out, the hands open up; just like clams opening to show their precious pearls.

Breathing in, close your clam again to protect the precious pearls.

Keep going... opening and closing your clam in time with our breathing, nice and slowly.

Breathing in as the clam closes... and breathing out as it opens...  
*(repeat 2-3 times)*

In a moment\*, we'll finish with open clams...  
*(take another couple of breaths)*

Slowly now letting our hands rest back on your lap.

Coming back to Sitting Mountain... Pause, breathe normally and smile.



\*If using a bell or chime, say "*When the bell rings*" here and gently ring the bell after another couple of breaths.

## Easy-Peasy-Squeezy

- ☆ Teacher guides pupils through the following mindfulness practice, using the script below.
- ☆ Pupils start in **Lying-down Mountain** posture. If space does not allow for lying down while maintaining physical distancing, start in **Sitting Mountain** posture.

Take a nice long deep breath in through your nose... As you breathe out, feel your head, back, legs, feet and arms touching the floor... Take a couple of nice steady breaths, in... and out... *(pause)*

Now squeeze your hands into fists. Pretend that you are squeezing a spongy ball in each hand... gripping tighter... squeeze even tighter... feel the tightness in your hands and up through your arms.

Now let go of the balls and relax the hands and arms... See how nice it feels when they relax.

Breathing in, stretch your arms up over your head like Superman, way back as far as they will go... Feel the squeeze and the gentle pull on your shoulders and arms.

Now let go of the squeeze and relax.... the arms are loose, like strings hanging down at your sides. *(pause)*

Now pretend to be a turtle pulling your head down into your shell. Breathing in, push your shoulders up to your ears... Squeeze tight... hold... and breathing out, let go of the squeeze... Your head comes back out and your neck gets long again. Allow the shoulders to fall back and down, nice and relaxed. *(pause)*

Pretend you just got a really nice, big surprise... stretch your mouth open wide... and open your eyes as wide as you can... hold it there... show that big surprise on your face... breathe out and relax your mouth... your jaw... your eyes... Smile as you think of that nice surprise... *(pause)*

Now pretend you're on the monkey bars in the playground... squeeze your tummy tight as you picture yourself grabbing each bar and swinging... Keep the tummy muscles tight until you reach the last bar... Breathe out and relax the tummy now. See how light you feel when you are relaxed... *(pause)*

Breathe in and squeeze your feet, curling your toes... Feel the squeeze spreading up your legs and around your bottom... Hold that squeeze... and now breathe out and relax. Feel your bottom, legs and feet relaxing... *(pause)*

Now, wiggle your toes and your fingers.... Breathe in and taking one big body stretch... reach your toes down as far as they'll go and your fingertips up as high as they'll go... like Superman, feeling strong and powerful. *(pause)* Breathe out... relax and smile...

## Learning across the Curriculum

### Precious Pearl

This Bizzy Break can be used as a starting point to explore **what being healthy means** and **marine life**. You might like to try the below activities.

#### SPHE

**Strand:** Myself  
**Strand Unit:** Taking care of my body

- Brainstorming what it means to be a 'healthy' person and capturing this in a drawing, painting or collage.

#### Science

**Strand:** Living things  
**Strand Unit:** Plants and animals

- Investigating the seashore as a habitat.
- Naming and learning about other land and sea animals that have shells.

### Easy Peasy Squeezy

This Bizzy Break can be used as a starting point to explore **relaxation** and **pushing/pulling**. You might like to try the below activities.

#### SPHE

**Strand:** Myself  
**Strand Unit:** Taking care of my body

- Discussing the importance of rest and relaxation for health and wellbeing.
- Listing different things we can do to help us to relax.

#### Science

**Strand:** Energy and forces  
**Strand Unit:** Forces

- Classifying different physical activities as pushing, pulling or both.



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**FIFTH  
CLASS**

**SIXTH  
CLASS**



## Balloon Breathing

- ☆ Blow up a balloon and demonstrate to the class how it expands when it is full of air and deflates when the air is let out. Explain that in this mindfulness activity we will be visualising our bellies as balloons, inflating and deflating. This is called 'belly breathing' and helps us to relax and calm our minds.
- ☆ Note that breathing in through the nose and out through the nose (if possible) is best for belly breathing.
- ☆ Guide pupils through the following mindfulness practice, using the script below.
- ☆ Instruct pupils to start in **Standing Mountain** posture.

**Equipment:**  
Balloon



Put one hand on the chest, over your heart, and the other on your belly, under the belly button... Close your eyes or gaze softly at a point in front of you...

*(pause)*

Listen to your breathing... feel the air coming in and going out of your body. Notice how your chest and your belly move up and down with the movement of the breath... *(pause)*

Now slowly breathe in through your nose for 1,2,3,4. Feel your belly rising like a balloon inflating.

And breathe out through your nose for a little longer than you breathed in (if you can) for 1,2,3,4,5,6. Feel your belly going back down slowly, like letting the air out of the balloon. Gently push the belly out as you breathe in – making room for lots of air and gently pull the belly in again as you breathe out.

Breathing in, the belly gets bigger for 1,2,3,4. Breathing out, the belly gets smaller for 1,2,3,4,5,6.

Let's keep going for a few more rounds, breathing in for 4 and out for 6; I'll let you know when we're going to stop. *(continue to count in for 4 and out for 6 for up to a minute)*

Let's finish on the next breath now, breathing out for a full count of 6... 1,2,3,4,5,6.

Now, when you're ready, gently let the hands rest back down at your sides... Coming back to Standing Mountain... Pause, breathe normally and smile.

## Butterfly Body Scan

- ☆ Guide pupils through the following mindfulness practice, using the script below.
- ☆ Instruct pupils to start in **Lying-down Mountain** posture. If space does not allow for lying down while maintaining physical distancing, start in **Sitting Mountain** posture.

Close your eyes and imagine you are lying down on lovely green grass, maybe in a garden or a park, on a nice sunny day... You see a beautiful butterfly. Picture in your head what colour it is - Blue? White? Red? Orange? Maybe it's your favourite colour or a mixture of colours. Take a moment to really notice the butterfly... *(pause)*

This is a friendly butterfly and it is fluttering around peacefully, gently landing on flowers here and there...

Now the butterfly is landing softly on your forehead... you can barely feel it there... It rests there for a moment and you feel your forehead relaxing... *(pause)*

Breathe in now, as the butterfly moves onto your right shoulder and flutters down your arm, relaxing your shoulder and arm as it lands, so softly and gently... Then it flies onto the other shoulder and arm ...relaxing your whole arm as it moves. Feel how both arms are relaxed now... *(pause)*

The butterfly flutters over to your tummy... As it lands you feel your tummy softening and relaxing... Breathe slowly and gently, careful not to frighten it away... *(pause)*

Now, the butterfly moves to your right leg... Feel your whole leg relaxing as it pauses there for a moment, nice and still... and it flits over to the other leg now.... Feel both of your legs relaxing from the butterfly's touch... *(pause)*

The butterfly is fluttering down to your right foot... As it lands on the tip of your big toe you feel the whole foot starting to soften and relax... After a moment, it flutters over to your other big toe... Now that whole foot begins to feel warm and soft as it relaxes... Feel your whole body relax; head... shoulders... arms... hands... tummy... legs... feet... *(pause)*

After a few moments the butterfly lifts off and it is gone... disappearing off into flowers and trees...

Breathing in, begin listening to the sounds in the classroom... Breathing out, feel the floor under you... *(pause)*

Breathing in, open your eyes and gently wiggle your fingers and toes... and when you're ready, roll over slowly onto your right side and come up to Sitting Mountain... pause here, take a few deep breaths and smile...



## Learning across the Curriculum

### Balloon Breathing

This Bizzy Break can be used as a starting point to explore **breathing** and **feelings**. You might like to try the below activities.

#### SPHE

**Strand:** Myself  
**Strand Unit:** Growing and changing

- Discussing how specific feelings and emotions make our bodies feel. Think about how our breathing is affected by different emotions and how we can use our breathing to help us deal with feelings.

#### Science

**Strand:** Living things  
**Strand Unit:** Human life

- Investigating the lungs and the different parts of the respiratory system. (Note that in the above activity, the belly breathing aims to engage the diaphragm muscle).
- Creating a model of the lungs using balloons, recycled plastic bottles and straws.

### Butterfly Body Scan

This Bizzy Break can be used as a starting point to explore **butterflies** and **descriptive language**. You might like to try the below activities.

#### Science

**Strand:** Living things  
**Strand Unit:** Plants and animals

- Researching the role of pollinators (such as bees and butterflies) in nature; discuss ways that they are in danger and things we can do to help create pollinator-friendly habitats.

#### Primary Language Curriculum

**Strand:** Writing  
**Learning Outcome:** (5) Vocabulary

- Brainstorming descriptive words associated with each of the five senses. Challenge pupils to write a short story or poem using descriptive language that engages the reader's/listener's senses.



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