



CONQUER MONKEY MIND WITH SQUARE BREATHING



“Monkey Mind” is a state of having your thoughts racing - it’s brought on by anxiety or stress. It’s like having a wild monkey in your mind that’s jumping around and swinging from tree to tree.

Monkey Mind can be distracting and make us irritable or anxious. This breathing exercise is a great solution for children who want a discreet way to deal with their stress.

1 Have your child think about whether they sometimes notice their thoughts racing through their mind or their heart beating fast. Ask them if they’ve ever had too many thoughts or too many worries at the same time. Let them know that a racing mind or heart is their body giving them a warning that they may have too much stress.

2 Let them know that one way to tame Monkey Mind is to use a special way of breathing called “square breathing.” Square breathing helps us lower our heart rate and put the monkey to sleep.

3 Ask them to imagine breathing around a square. Start at the bottom left-hand corner and breathe up the square by inhaling for four counts—one, two, three and four.

4 Now ask them to hold their breath along the top of the square while you count—one, two, three, four.

5 Next have them exhale along the right side of the square while you count—one, two, three and four.

6 Finally, have them hold their breath again along the bottom of the square: one, two, three and four.

7 Encourage your child to continue square breathing until they notice their thoughts become more still. Sit for a moment together and enjoy the effects.



EXPERT TIP:

Some children may find square breathing difficult, but they can easily master triangle breathing by inhaling along one side, exhaling along the second side and holding their breath to finish. Most children find holding their breath after the exhalation to be the most difficult step. Teach children that they can avoid taking a sip of air by placing their hand on their tummy; it’s the easiest way to track whether or not air is coming in.