

Relaxation

Breathing Exercises:

Tummy breathing – place a teddy or soft toy on your tummy and watch as it rises and falls as you rock it to sleep.

Imagine you are breathing in love, peace and happiness feel it fill your body – breathe it out into room.

Balloon breathing – imagine you are blowing up a balloon. Take in a deep breath, and slowly and steadily blow up your huge balloon. See your balloon getting bigger and bigger. Imagine writing your worries on the balloon. Now close your eyes and imagine the balloon rising into the air, taking all your worries with it. As you breathe out, watch it drift further and further away.

Massage:

Can help relaxation of mind and body and promote production of 'feel good' hormones e.g. oxytocin. It also promotes bonding and enhances self-worth. You can add massage strokes to stories/rhymes or can write a story about the bedtime routine and put massage strokes to it. This can be particularly good for children who have communication problems or are non-verbal. Remember to ask for permission before massage.

Mindfulness:

The practice of being aware of your body, mind and feelings in the present moment can be incorporated into daily routine e.g. when walking to school spend 1 minute being aware of everything you can see or hear; do some mindful eating – how does the food feel, smell, look like, taste. A good grounding exercise is to name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell and 1 you can taste. One of the easiest mindful exercises is to simply spend some time focusing on your breathing.

Relaxation/Visualisations:

Create the right atmosphere – you can play soft music in background. Make sure your child is in a comfortable, relaxed position. Start with a relaxation exercise, tensing and releasing body parts from head to toe before reading a visualisation. Read slowly in gentle, relaxing voice remembering to leave pauses to allow child to process and visualise the scene.

Remember:

Relaxation starts with you. Have a go and find out what works for you and your child, adapting exercises to your child's interests. Have fun and keep it simple!

