

Breathe with Me: Mindful Breathing Exercises

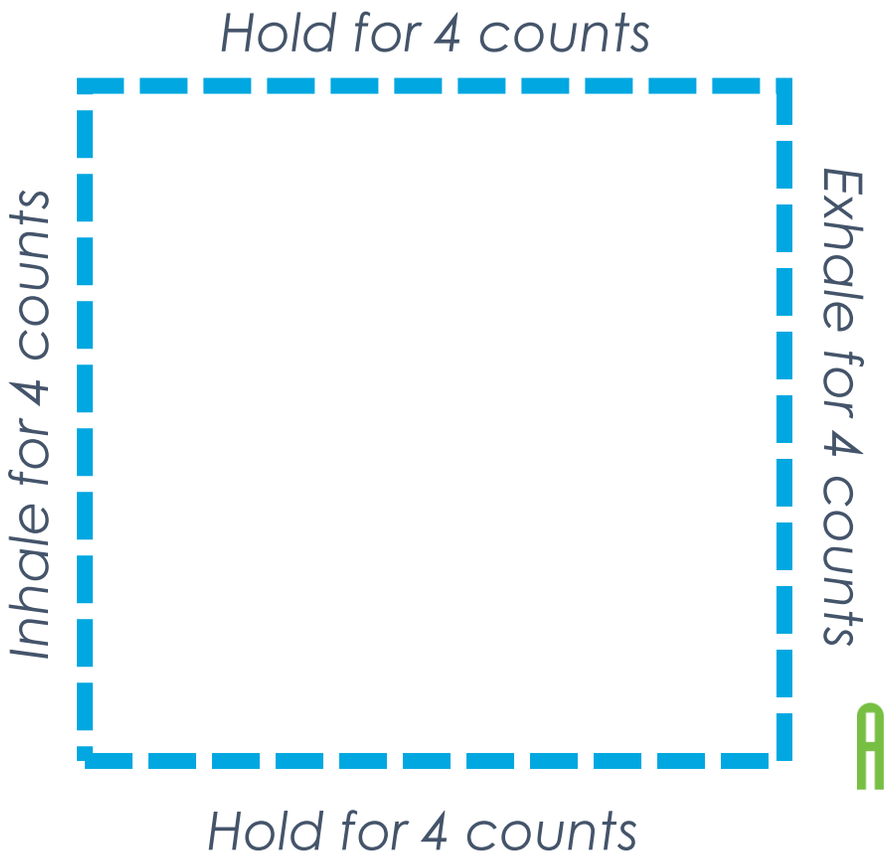
ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#1 – Four-Square (Box) Breath

Also known as 4-4-4-4 breathing aid, this four-part breathing technique is a simple and easy exercise for all ages.

Things to notice: Pay attention to how fast you breathe and trace. Try to stay on count: 1…2…3…4….

For this four-part breath, imagine a square or trace the outline of a square in the palm of your hand or in the air. Inhale, trace one side. Hold, trace the second side. Exhale, trace the third side. Hold, trace the fourth side. Repeat – tracing the shape of a square with each part of the breath.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#2 – Alternate Nostril Breathing

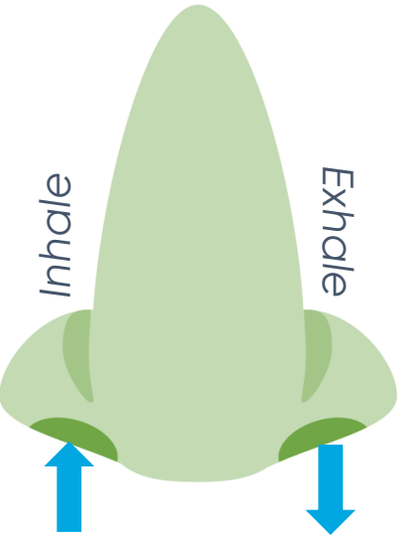
Alternate nostril breathing helps calm the central nervous system and reset the body.

Things to notice: Pay attention to the depth of your breath and focus on taking full deep breaths.

Hold your palm out in front of you and bring the middle three fingers down. Pinch your thumb and pinky finger together or toward each other. Press your thumb firmly on the outside of your nostril on the same side as the hand you are using.



Inhale deeply through the other nostril. Release your thumb and press your pinky finger firmly on the outside of your nostril on the opposite side of the hand you are using. Exhale deeply through the other nostril. Repeat – breathing deeply in through one nostril and out through the other. Then switch.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#3 – Belly Breathing

The fullest inhales come from the depth of our bellies. Bring awareness to the rise and fall of your belly with each breath.

Things to notice: Notice the rise and fall of your belly as it expands and relaxes with each breath.

Sit comfortably and allow the belly to fully relax. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your heart. On the inhale breathe from the very bottom of your belly and feel how your belly expands. On the exhale, bring attention to the feeling of release as your belly falls. Like the ebb and flow of a wave. Repeat several times, breathing deeper as you go.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#4 – Breathe Upon a Star

Practice mindful breathing while focusing on tracing the outline of your hand.

Things to notice: Pay attention to how fast you breathe and trace. Try to focus on taking slow deep breaths.

Spread your palm out like a star. Trace the outline of your hand with the index finger on your other hand. Trace up as you inhale, down as you exhale. Repeat until you've taken five deep breaths and repeat on the other hand.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#5 – Follow the Bead

Imagine a bead and follow it along a string with each breath.

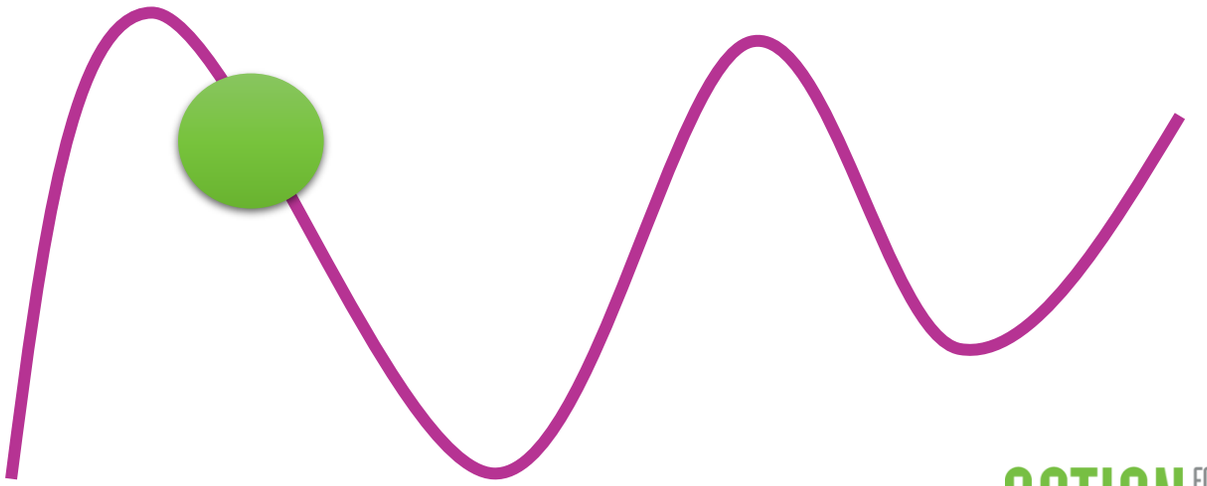
Things to notice: Pay attention to the moment in between the inhale and the exhale.

Imagine a bead on a string. What color is it? What is it made of? What shape is it?

Now imagine the string. What color is it? What is it made of? The string now begins to make a shape – any shape. What shape is it?

As you inhale, watch the bead move along the string and as you exhale, follow the bead back to where it began.

Repeat.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#6 – Birthday Candles

Practice long, slow exhales as your blow out imaginary candles.

Things to notice: Pay attention to the force of your breath. Is it slow and steady or is it strong and fast?

Spread your palm out in front of you. Pretend each finger is a birthday candle. Inhale a deep breath and with a slow exhale, blow out the birthday candles one by one – slowly lowering one finger down at a time while you exhale. Repeat on the other hand.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

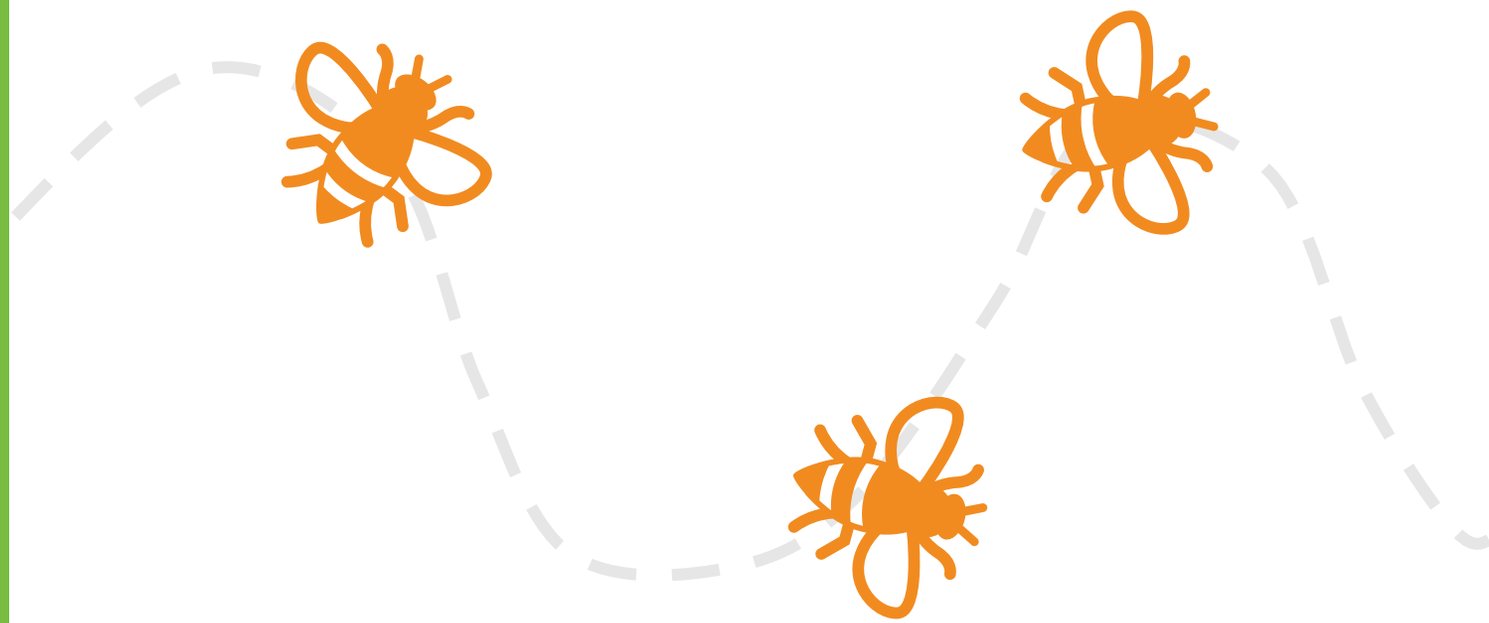
#7 – Bumble Bee Breath

Practice mindful breathing with a calming humming sound.

Things to notice: Do you feel differently with a humming or a buzzing sound? How is this exercise different without the sound?

Imagine you are a buzzing bumble bee.

Inhale a deep a breath in through the nose. With a slow exhale, hum or buzz like a bee. Cup your palms around your ears to amplify the comforting sound and vibration. Repeat.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#8 – Hot Air Balloon (or Bubbles)

Focus on the pace of your breath with this mindful breathing exercise.

Things to notice: Pay attention to the pace of your breath. Too fast – and the bubble will pop! Too slow – and the balloon won't lift off. Find a nice even pace.

Begin by cupping your hands round your mouth.

Take a deep breath in through your nose and slowly start to blow out through your mouth, growing your hands outwards in time with your exhale as if you are blowing up an enormous hot air balloon or bubble. Repeat.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#9 – Lemon Squeeze

Isolate different muscles by tensing and releasing each muscle group to help relax the body and connect the body back to the mind.

Things to notice: Pay attention to warmth or a tingly feeling in the muscles as you release and relax. Sometimes we don't even realize how our muscles might tense up during different parts of the day or with different emotions.

Starting at the feet, take note of the different muscle groups in the body including the feet, legs, belly, shoulder, arms, and hands. Gently squeeze the muscles in each group while inhaling and counting to five. Exhale and slowly release at the same pace. Repeat with each group and finally the whole body together.



ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

#10 – I AM

Pair belly breathing with positive affirmations to calm the mind and reframe your outlook.

Place your left hand over your heart and your right hand over your belly. Inhale and notice them rise, exhale notice them fall. Before each deep breath – say a positive "I am" statement out loud. As you breathe, imagine you are bringing all of that quality that exists within you to share out into the world as you exhale.

I am strong.

I am brave.

I am kind.

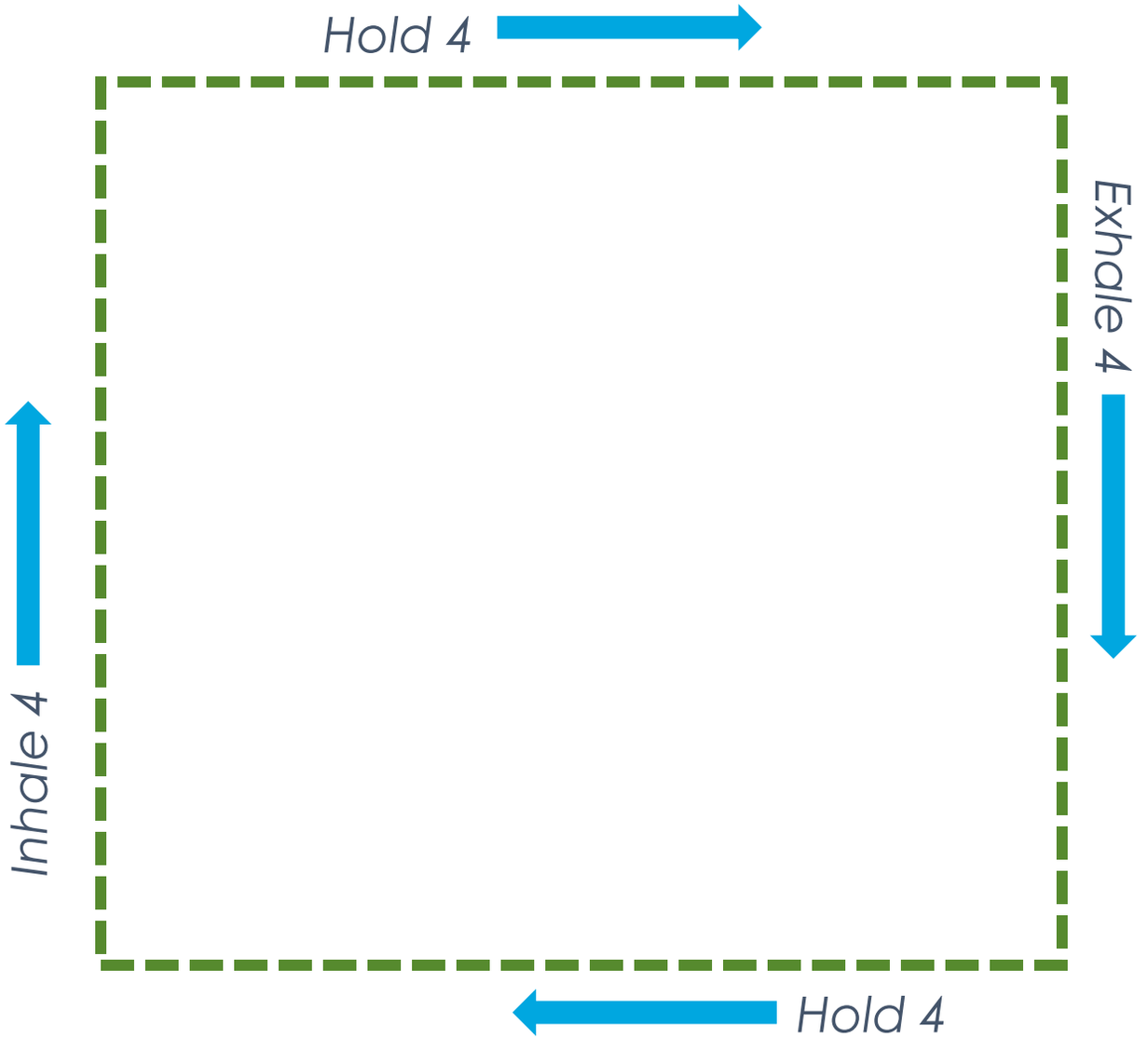
I am powerful.

I am important.



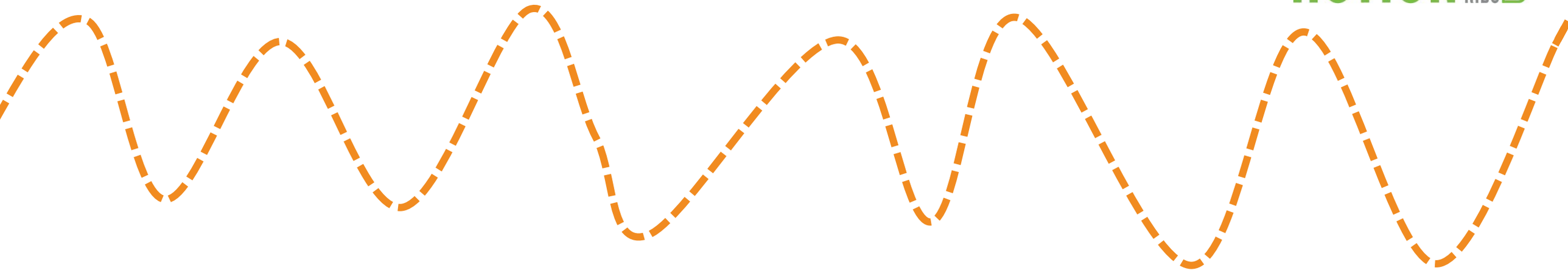
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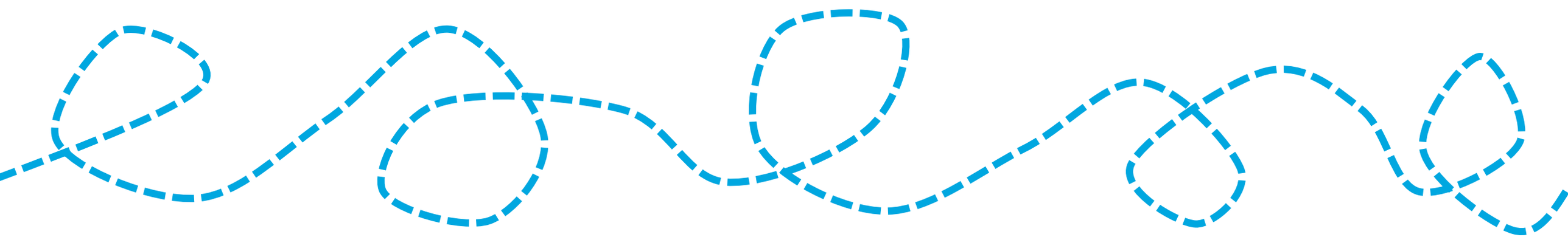
Printable Tracing Mats



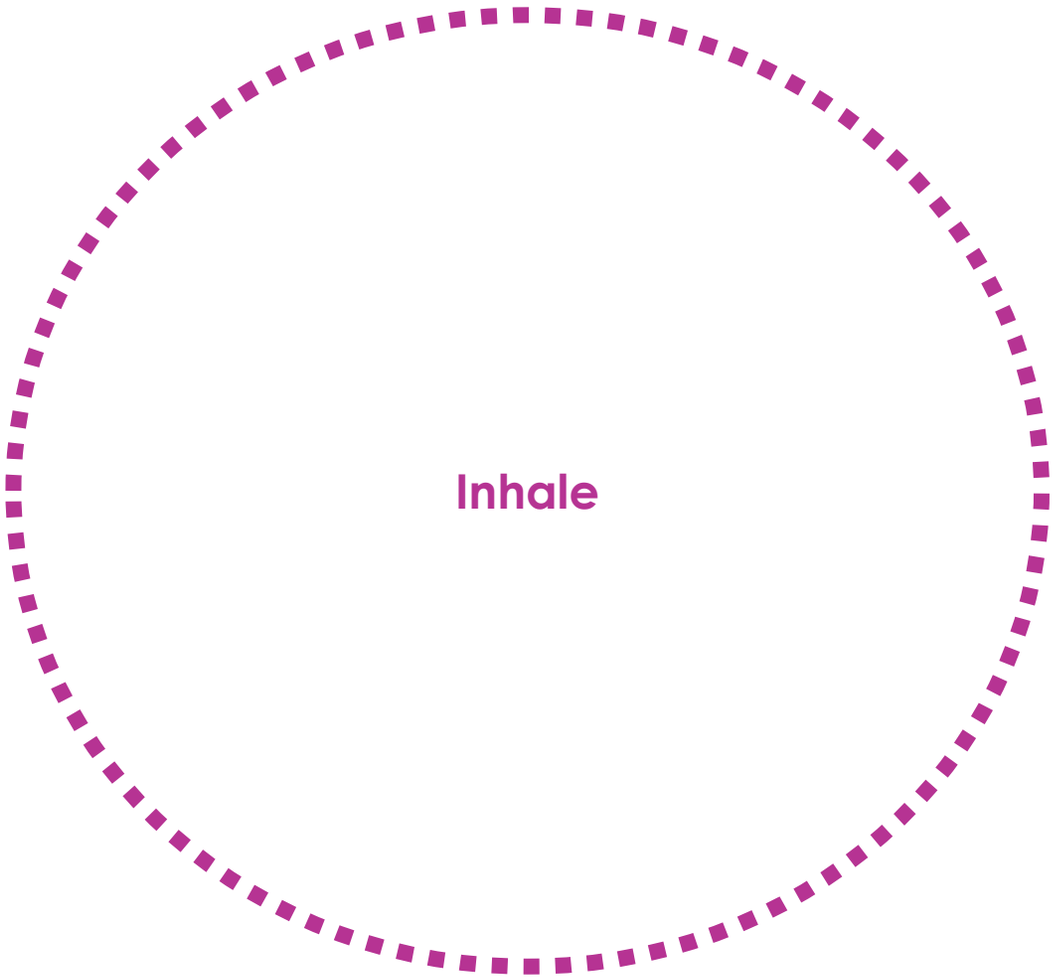
Trace the square with full deep breaths.

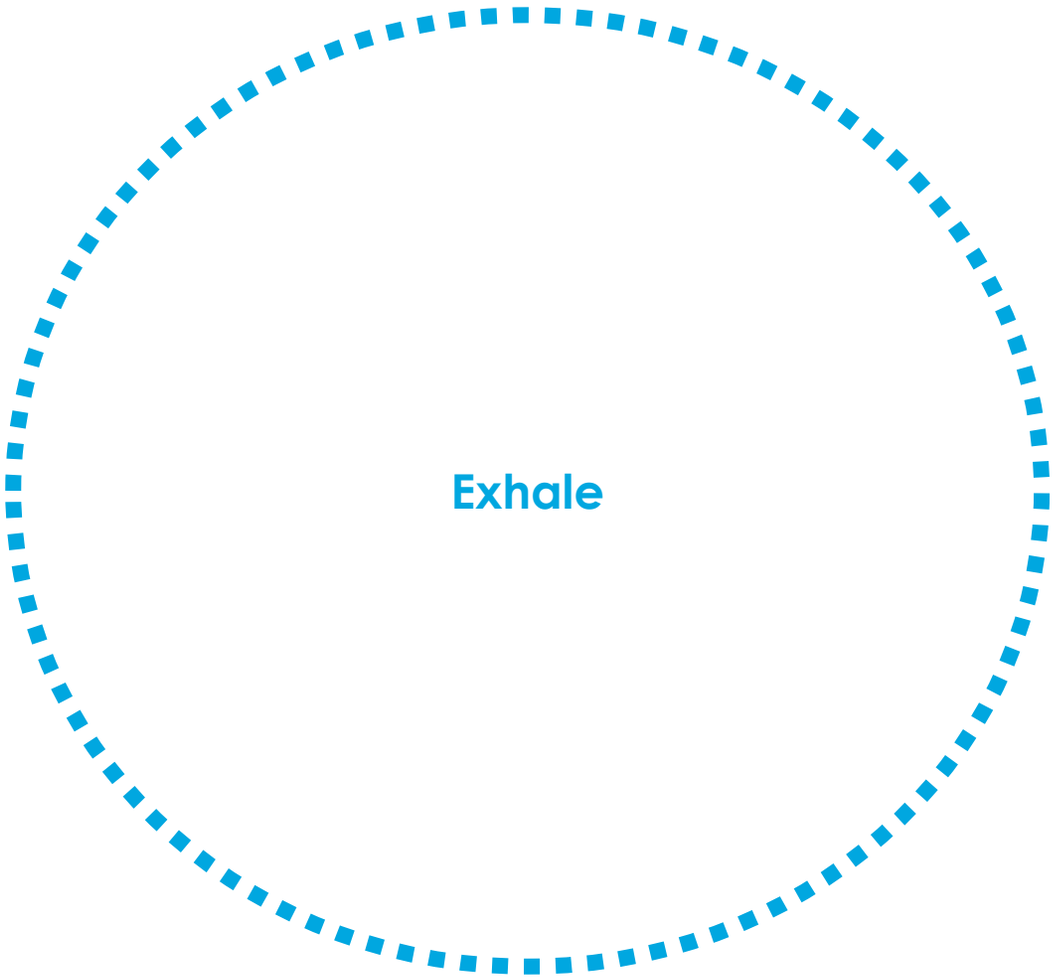
ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS





Trace to the left on the inhale, trace to the right on the exhale.





Trace the circles with full deep breaths.

feet legs belly shoulders arms hands body

Gently squeeze the muscles in each group as you inhale and count…

1… 2… 3… 4… 5…

Exhale and release.

I am

I am

I am

I am

Write your own positive affirmations to pair with mindful breathing exercises.