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MAKING MEDITATION AND DEEP BREATHING FUN FOR YOUR KIDS!

Posted on 4/15/2014 by Lisa Roberts in [Kids Meditation](#)



Kids today are more stressed than ever before. Loaded with schoolwork, extra curricular activities, responsibilities and expectations, they experience physical stress from using computers and carrying heavy backpacks, as well as psychological stress from bullying and peer pressure. Technological advancements have introduced stressors into the lives of modern children that previous generations did not experience. Cyber-bullying is a big issue that has received a lot of attention in the media, but the need to always be connected along with the demand for instant gratification also grossly impacts our children's stress levels.

Invariably running in overdrive, kids are distracted, unable to focus, and unequipped to cope when things do not go their way or when faced with challenging or stressful situations. Being constantly wired or in "go" mode is not a healthy state for anybody, and kids especially need to rest their minds and bodies, yet many children do not know how to slow things down, or relax.

As yogis we can appreciate that the benefits of simple proper breathing and meditation extend beyond controlling stress: increased oxygen levels, improved blood circulation, improved posture, enhanced mental clarity and ability to focus, elevated mood states and pain control, to name a few. Sounds extremely beneficial—and necessary—but how do you convey this to kids?

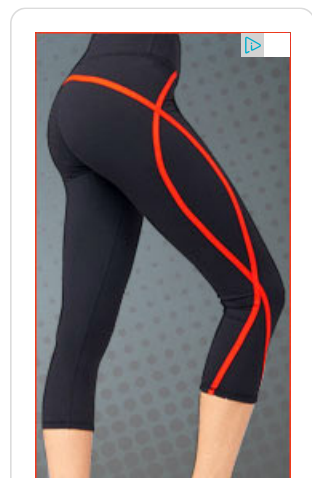
Most kids, when told that something is good for them, shy away from it. Not that they necessarily gravitate toward things that are bad for them, but "good" simply does not sound like "fun" to a kid. Can breathing and meditation techniques be engaging and fun for kids? Of course they can! Children do not need to sit in lotus posture chanting "ohm" or endure boring lectures about the advantages of taking slow, deep, diaphragmatic breaths—and many children won't—to benefit from, or learn, breathing and meditation techniques.

Wise and crafty mamas have been known to disguise broccoli in chocolate sauce to get their kids to want to eat it, and with a little creative thinking, traditional breathing and meditation techniques can be served up in a similar manner. Call it yoga incognito, if you like, but it works!

Adapting traditional techniques to appeal to different ages, personalities and tastes while speaking in a language that kids can relate can be challenging but also a lot of fun. And when your kids or the kids you teach experience their "aha" moment and "get it", enjoy it, and want to do it again, the reward for your creative efforts will be infinite as you realize that you've planted a seed that will continue grow within that child for life.

Ready to give it a try? Think of your favorite breathing or meditation technique. Now think about ways you can make it appealing to a kid. Pop on your creative-thinking cap and practice the technique yourself – really explore it with an open mind and see what comes up.

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Does it remind you of a character? Darth Vader is a popular and obvious choice for Ujayyi Breathing. Is there a movement or action that conjures a fun name or analogy, for example Twizzler Breath or Twister Breath for Alternate Nostril Breathing. Body Scan Relaxation/Meditation Technique? – Easy, breezy! Or Ipad Reboot and Recharge! (See Below)

You are only limited by your creativity and imagination and if you ever feel like you are getting stuck for ideas, consult an expert. Yes, a kid. Teach the technique and ask them what it reminds them of. You'll never be short of fun and appealing ideas when you enlist the help of a kid!

Here is an example of how to get creative with a meditation:

Ipad Reboot and Recharge - For kids ages 8 and up and adults too!

What is I-pad Reboot and Recharge? I-pad Reboot and Recharge is a relaxation technique where you focus on closing down the applications you have running in your mind and body, leaving you refreshed, recharged and revitalized.

How does it help me? Have you ever left your I-pad (I-pod, computer, phone etc.) on all day and night and not recharged it? The battery ran out, right? Well, people are not much different. Our minds and bodies are very busy machines that work really hard, to keep them functioning at an optimal level we need to unplug and rest up every now and then. Reboot and Recharge!

How do I do it?

Begin in a comfortable position – preferably lying on your back. If this is not possible, sit comfortably in a chair, both feet in contact with the floor, spine naturally erect, shoulders and arms relaxed, hands resting in lap.

Take a deep inhale through your nose and open your mouth to exhale with a sigh, allowing the body to relax as you exhale. Repeat three times.

Imagine you're an I-pad, you've been working hard, almost all of your apps are open or running and your battery is fading. We need to close down your apps and charge you up so you will feel like new again. Let's journey through the apps and close each one down by focusing on it and allowing it to relax.

Slowly move through the body, imagining each body part as an app that needs to be switched off. Focus on it and switch it off, relax it. When you feel ready, move along to the next app and do the same.

Once Scan is complete take a moment to recharge your I-pad, soaking in vibrant energy as you allow it to charge up!

By Lisa Roberts



Lisa Roberts is a Registered Yoga Teacher, Registered Children's Yoga Teacher and certified Children's Yoga Therapist. Involved in the pediatric wellness field since 2006, she was the first complementary therapist to work from the inception of a pediatric wellness program for oncology patients and their families/caregivers at New York University's Hassenfeld Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders. In 2008, following a move to Saint Louis MO, she volunteered at a major children's hospital to continue her work offering wellness techniques to staff. Launching YoYo Yoga Therapy, a private yoga therapy practice for kids aged 1 to 101, in 2011, Lisa was hired as an independent contractor as the hospital's first yoga instructor, where she continues to work today, creating curriculum and teaching yoga to patients, patient siblings, and staff. *Visit Lisa's [website](#) and connect with her on [facebook](#) for more information.*

She is the author of [Breathe, Chill – A Handy Book of Games and Techniques Introducing Breathing, Relaxation and Meditation to Kids and Teens](#).

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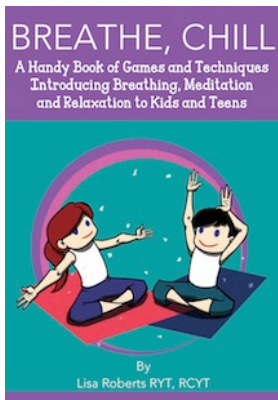
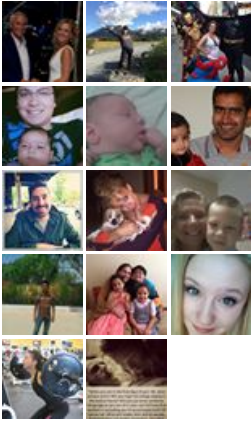


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A compilation of 70 fun breathing, meditation and relaxation exercises cleverly disguised as engaging games and activities *Breathe, Chill* is presented in a simple kid-friendly format: What is it? How does it help me? How do I do it? Adaptable for kids of all ages, the techniques presented can be accessed in a classroom to focus an entire class before an exam, or a hospital room to help a patient relax during an uncomfortable medical procedure, and everywhere in between.

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April — Ellen, one more thing I forgot to mention...you can always try a guided meditation, or simply listen to some ...

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