

Waves for Change Take 5

Breathing exercises are a useful tool, that can help us to calm down, focus, and relax.

At Waves for Change, we teach our coaches and children to use the Take 5 breathing exercise at home, at the beach, at work or school - wherever! - to calm down and cope with their feelings. It can help us to pause, before we decide what we want to do next.

The Take 5 can also help us change our focus when we are feeling scared, anxious, or overwhelmed. By focusing on our body and/or our environment, instead of the feelings that are overwhelming us, we give our brain and body an important chance to calm down. Distracting ourselves can give our brain and body time to calm down. When we are calm, we feel better, are healthier, and can make better choices about we say and do.



Coaches and participants have said that the Take 5 helps them calm down when they're feeling angry, scared or sad; helps them to focus on difficult tasks; and helps them to make better decisions that aren't too reactive. So, this is an important skill!

The key is to help people become aware of what they're feeling, without judging those feelings and thoughts as good or bad. It's nearly impossible to totally clear one's mind or have no thoughts, but you can learn to let those thoughts come and go and choose not to pay them too much attention.

Below are the steps for a W4C Take 5.

1. Make sure everyone is sitting comfortably, with their eyes closed.
2. Everyone takes a deep breath in through the nose, for four counts. This must be a slow, deep breath, but not so slow that anyone runs out of air and feels anxious.
3. Breathe out for four counts through the mouth.
4. As you breathe in deeply through the nose again, become aware of all the sounds around you. Listen to them carefully. Don't worry about your thoughts - let them come and go. Then breathe out through your mouth for four counts: 1, 2, 3, 4.
5. Breathe in through your nose again and become aware of all the sensations in your body. Are you warm, or cold? What is your body telling you? Breathe out, and just focus your attention on what's happening inside you. Take another deep breath in, filling your lungs and letting your thoughts come and go without worrying about them. Breathe out through your mouth.
6. Now its time for the last breath. Breathe in deeply through your nose for a count of four: 1, 2, 3, 4. And hold it, keeping in all your air. Hold it for four counts, feeling the air in your lungs. Focus your energy on that feeling... and release all the air out through your mouth. When you are ready, you can slowly open your eyes.
7. Check in with how you are feeling after the Take 5. Calm? Relaxed? Energised? Focused? Remember, you can do the Take 5 whenever and wherever you need to, to help you and your friends and family to feel calm and strong and be bananas!