

Stress Test

How does it help students?

- When we are stressed, our bodies often become stressed and clenched. This activity promotes awareness of these responses and encourages students to relax their bodies through controlled breathing.

What will we need? (*any one of the following - or similar - items*)

- Soft rubber or fabric stress ball
- Wad of balled up tissue paper
- Pair of balled up socks

How do we do it?

- Squeeze one of the items above as tightly as you can for ten seconds. Squeeze *really* tight for the *entire* ten seconds!
- Notice what happens to your jaw, your shoulders, your back, and other areas of your body. What happens to your breathing?
- Next, take a deep breath in, and as you s-l-o-w-l-y breath out, squeeze the prop again.
- Scan your body and consciously relax any areas where you are tensing up, other than the fist squeezing the prop.
- Can you squeeze the prop as tightly as possibly while breathing deeply and consciously relaxing the entire rest of your body?
- Notice how different this approach feels in comparison to the first try.

Additional Notes:

- This activity can also be done without props entirely. Simply encourage students to tense up their fists and squeeze as tightly as possible.

Source: Roberts, L. (2014). *Breathe, chill*. Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing.