

Create Boundaries with
Beginning and End of Day
Routines



Name: _____

Boundaries help us reclaim our time, our space and our routines. But when home life and work life collide, we end up with blurred lines and finding balance can feel impossible. Here are a few boundaries to put in place in order to keep you from feeling overwhelmed, inefficient and stressed.

Daily Ritual/Routine Ideas

- Before leaving your classroom or office, create a list of everything you “still need to do” or need to do tomorrow. Leave the list there or ceremoniously place it in a closed container with an intention to not bring it home with you.
- Consider finding a stone or object from nature and place it on your desk as your “here and now object.” At the end of your day, shift your attention to the feel and sight of the here and now object as a transition from school to home.
- Once you leave the school building, take a deep breath of the outside air (even if it’s cold) and look at the sky. Smell and listen to the environment around you. Mark the transition from school to after-school consciously place yourself in a new environment.
- Practice 5-10 minutes of a Guided Relaxation or other guided relaxation in your car before leaving school or before entering your home.
- Have a tea ceremony when you get home from work. Focus all your attention on your five senses as you drink a cup of tea.
- For the entire drive home, list things you are grateful for. Simply use the sentence starter, “I am grateful for . . .”
- Wake up with an alarm and drink a glass of water.
- Complete light morning or evening stretches.
- Repeat mantra or complete brief meditation before interacting with others.
- Pay attention to five senses while walking into work.
- Create a ‘ta-da’ list to celebrate top 2-3 accomplishments that day.
- Pack bag and tidy up space while listening to music.
- Take 5-10 breaths (Belly Breath or Alternate Nostril Breathing) to refocus your mind

Quiet Your Mind

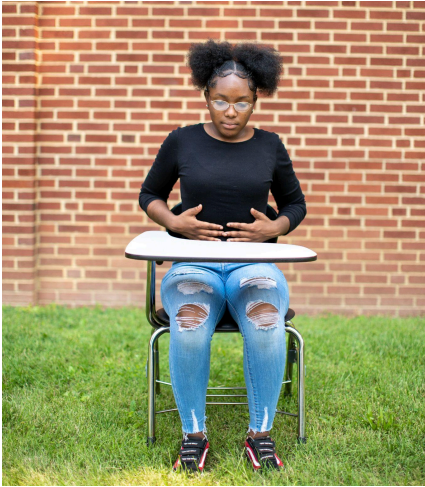
Learn how to pause and quiet your mind between events in the day. This is a helpful technique to use to transition your mind out of work mode too. Guided Visualization is a useful tool for practicing self-care and using mindfulness to combat any stress you may have carried over into the evening.

Here are strategies to help you take a pause to quiet your mind:

1. **Breathe** - pay close attention to your breath by using abdominal breathing to take slow, deep breaths. Consider taking 6-8 breaths per minute.
2. **Move** - Move your body with rhythm and repetition. This could be a walk, yoga, or another form of exercise (movement). It releases endorphins -- chemicals that make you feel good and can help improve your mood, focus, and sleep.
3. **Relax** - Progressive Muscle Relaxation uses the connection with your body to soothe your mind. Pick a body part -- foot, leg, mouth, eyes -- and tense it for a few seconds. Then release and relax for 10 seconds or so. Notice how that feels different. Switch to another part, and keep going until you've done your whole body. This can also improve sleep and may even ease headaches and stomachaches.

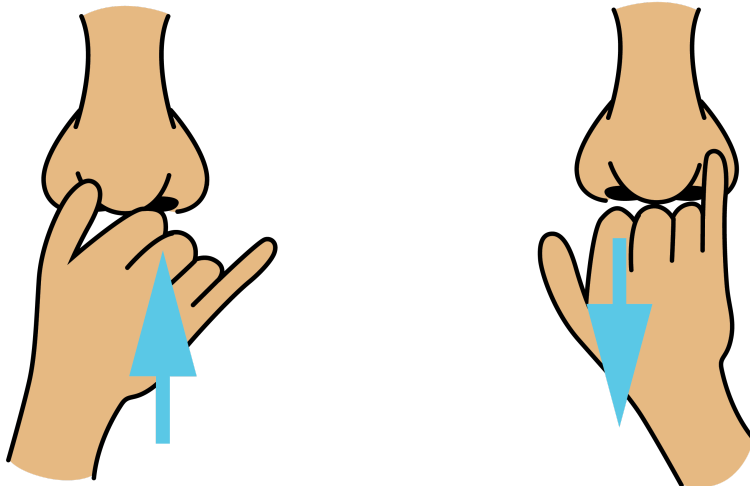
BREATHE

Belly Breath

Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Opening: Choose to sit in Align the Spine or stand in Mountain. Allow your eyes to close, or lower your gaze. Place your hands on your belly, and relax your shoulders.● Take long, deep breaths in and out through your nose. Feel your belly rise and fall with each breath.● Breathe in slowly to a count of three like this . . . Breathe in for three, two, one. Now breathe out to a count of three like this Breathe out for three, two, one. Continue this deep, abdominal breathing for nine more rounds.● I will count each breath backward from nine to one. Breathe in and fill your lungs, nine (pause). Breathe out slowly, nine (pause). [Lead students in nine rounds of Belly Breath or as many as needed.]● Closing: End with a long, deep breath in and out.
Image	 A photograph of a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans with rips at the knees. She is sitting on a metal chair outdoors on a grassy area. Her hands are placed on her abdomen, and she is looking directly at the camera. The background is a red brick wall.

Alternate Nostril Breath

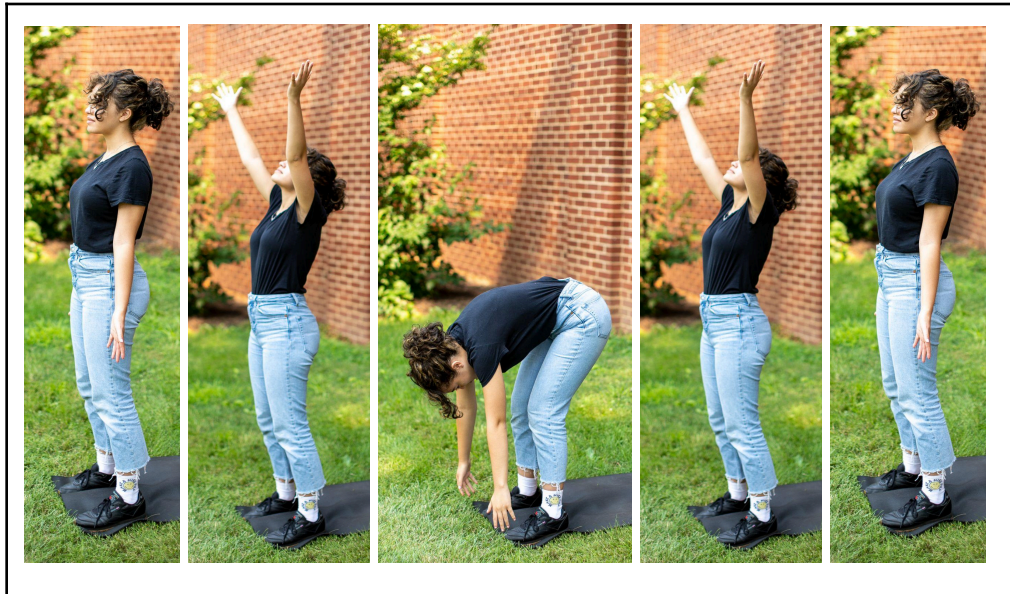
- Sit up tall, and align your spine. Make a fist with your right hand. Stick out your pinky and your thumb, making a ‘surfer dude’ hand. Turn your palm to face you.
- Use your thumb to press your right nostril closed and take a full breath in through your open left nostril. Pause. Use your pinky to press your left nostril closed and release your thumb, opening your right nostril. Breathe out slowly through your right nostril. Take a full breath in through your open right nostril. Pause. Use your thumb to press your right nostril closed and release your pinky, opening your left nostril. Breathe out slowly through your left nostril.
- Repeat this for nine more rounds on your own. If you feel comfortable, you can close your eyes to help you focus on your breath.
- *[Continue to model **Alternate Nostril Breath** as students complete nine more rounds on their own.]*
- Now shift your awareness back to the room. The practice of **Alternate Nostril Breath** is complete.



MOVE

Half Sun Sequence

- **Mountain:** Stand tall with your arms by your sides, palms facing forward.
- **Extended Mountain:** Breathe in and reach your arms overhead, extending your fingertips towards the ceiling.
- **Forward Fold:** Breathe out, and fold your torso over your legs.
- **Extended Mountain:** Breathe in, and reach your arms all the way back up.
- **Mountain:** Breathe out, and stand tall like a mountain. This completes one round of Half Sun Sequence. [Repeat as many rounds as needed.]

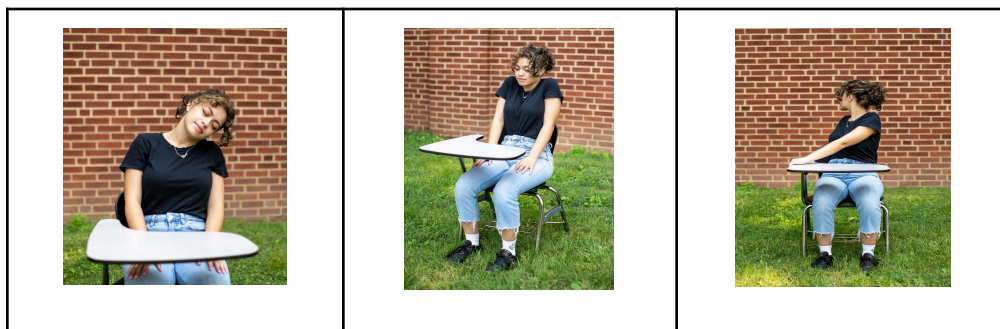


RELAX

We carry stress in specific parts of the body - our face, neck, shoulders, and hips. Throughout the day, create a routine to intentionally release this stress with specific movement.

Seated Stretches

- **Neck Stretches:** Sit up tall and align your spine. Drop your right ear towards your right shoulder, stretching the left side of your neck. Hold here for two breaths . Now switch sides, releasing your left ear towards your left shoulder, stretching the right side of your neck. Hold here for two breaths and notice any sensations. Breathe in and bring your head and neck back through the center. Breathe out and drop your right ear towards your right shoulder again. As you breathe in, roll your neck forward, tucking your chin into your chest. Breathe out and roll your neck to the left reaching your left ear towards your left shoulder. Breathe in and roll your neck back gently gazing up at the ceiling. Breathe out and roll your neck to the right, reaching your right ear towards your right shoulder again. *(Complete three more neck circles. Repeat the neck circles in the opposite direction.)*
- **Shoulder Stretch:** On your next breath in, lift your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe out through your nose and relax your shoulders away from your ears. Release all the tension from your shoulders. Continue lifting your shoulders when you breathe in and relaxing your shoulders down when you breathe out.” *(Complete five more rounds.)*
- **Back Stretch:** Breathe in and lift your arms overhead. Breathe out and twist to the right. Rest your right hand on the back of your chair and your left hand on the outside of your right leg. Look back over your right shoulder. Complete three deep breaths before repeating on the left side.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

To get started, find a very comfortable relaxed position. You may want to close your eyes, or feel free to keep them open if you're more comfortable that way.

Let's begin by focusing on your breathing, following your breath as it comes into your body and goes out of your body. Take 3 slow, full natural breaths in and out, noticing how your energy rises on the in-breath and falls on the out breath. Slow even breaths can help our bodies begin to relax as we start to notice the difference between tension and relaxation.

Now, focus on your feet, continuing to breathe evenly and naturally. Tighten the muscles in your feet by clenching your toes and pulling the tops of your feet up towards your shins. Hold the tension, continue to hold... then release and relax, noticing the difference between tension and calm relaxation.

Next, focus on your lower legs. Tighten those muscles in your calves... tight and tense... hold... then release and relax, allowing the tension to drain away and melt into the ground. Notice the experience of peaceful relaxation in your calves. Continue to breathe naturally and easily as you pay attention to the relaxation in your calves.

Shift your awareness now to your upper legs. Tense and tighten the muscles in your thighs, hold them tight, tensing... then release and relax, letting any tightness, discomfort or stress flow away while continuing to notice the difference between tension and tranquility. Stay with that experience while continuing to breathe easily and calmly.

Now let's move your awareness to your stomach and back. Tighten those muscles by pulling your belly button as far as you can towards your back, tight and tense. Hold... tight... then release and relax, making plenty of space in your abdomen for your breath, noticing how it feels to allow your muscles to be still.

Gently shift your attention to your hands. Tighten your fingers into tight, tense fists... squeezing as tight as you can... then release and relax, letting any tension or discomfort flow out through your fingertips. Take time for the experience as the tension melts away, replaced by a feeling of calm, peaceful relaxation.

Next focus on your arms. Tighten all of those muscle, pulling your arms in as tight as you can into your body... tight and tense... and hold... then release and relax, allowing your

arms to settle, noticing the difference between stress and stillness. Take the time to breathe into this experience.

Now move on to your shoulders and neck. Go ahead and lift your shoulders up and in, really pulling them into your neck, and hold tight, tensing them... Then release and relax, letting your shoulders fall gently down and back, letting go of any stress and allowing the muscles in your neck and shoulders to be free from tension.

Now gently focus your attention on all the tiny little muscles of your face. Tighten those muscles by tightly shutting your eyes, clenching your jaw and stretching your lips up and back. ... maintain the tension... then release and relax, letting your muscles be settled and comfortable, paying attention to the difference between the tightness of tension and the comfort of relaxation.

And now, imagine looking over your whole body to see if there are any remaining areas of tension or discomfort. Gently breathe into those areas, imagining oxygen is going directly to any areas of tension.

Enjoy for a few more moments the comfort and relaxation you feel ... knowing that you can return here at any time. Allow your body to continue to feel comfortable and relaxed, even as your attention turns elsewhere. When we are relaxed we are more focused, experience less pain and are more able to be connected to what we are doing.

When you are ready, take one more full breath and gently bring your attention to the world around you. Wiggle your fingers and your toes.

Your Progressive Muscle Relaxation experience is complete.

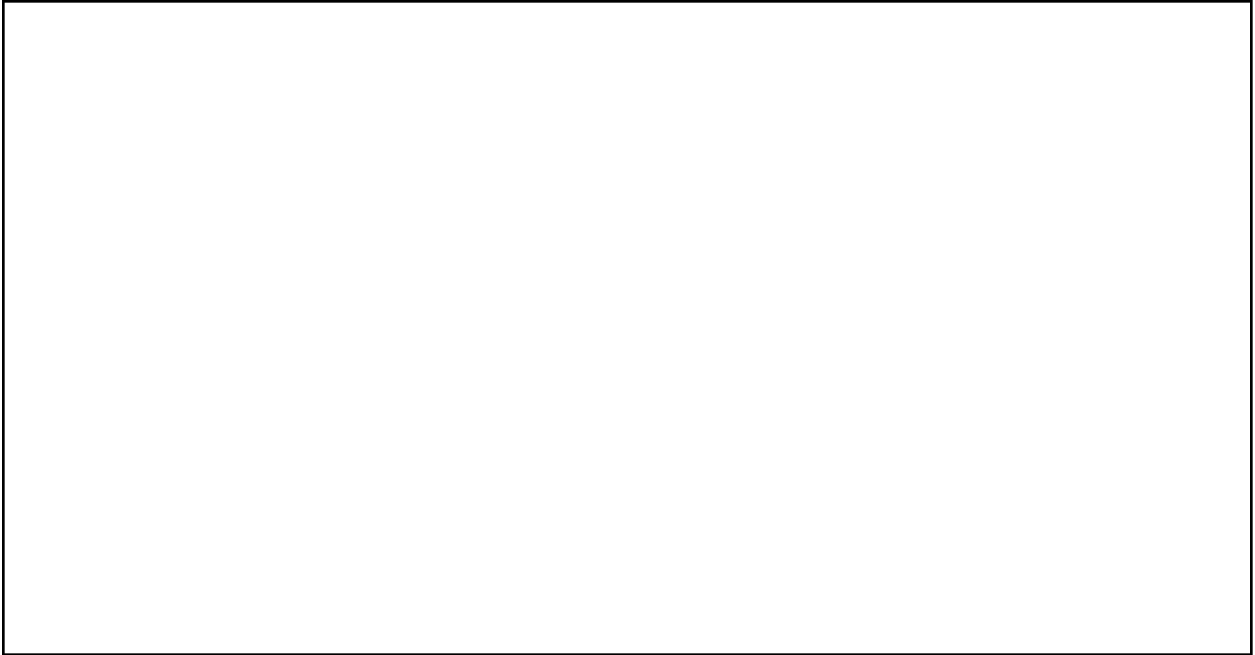
REFLECT

What did you notice?

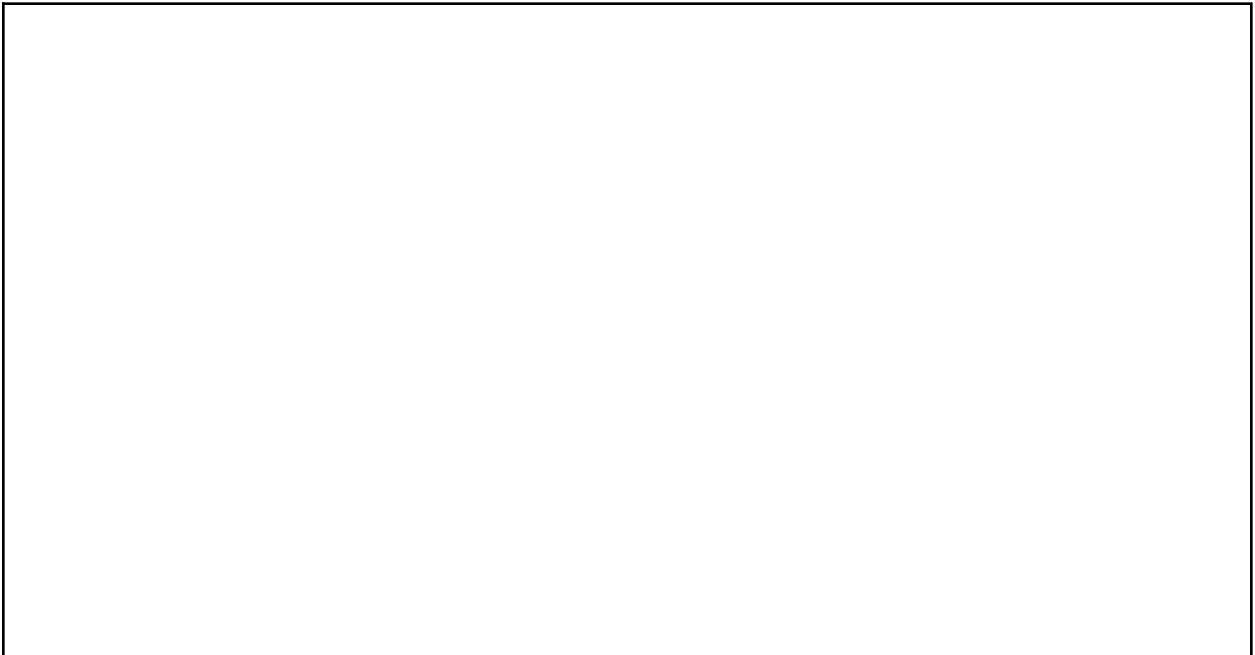
How do you envision using these techniques to create routines?

PLAN

- Record 1-3 **morning** rituals or routines you can commit to for the next month.



- Record 1-3 **end of day** rituals or routines you can commit to for the next month.



Mindfulness Apps

Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com/educators> (Free for educators)

Stop, Breathe & Think: <https://www.stopbreathethink.com> (Some free meditations)

Insight Timer: <https://insighttimer.com> (Free)

Calm: <https://www.calm.com> (Free for educators)

Smiling Mind: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app> (Free)

Oxford MBCT: <https://oxfordmindfulness.org/news/oxford-mbct-app/> (Free)