

No matter who you are or where you are, take time to care for yourself by taking deep breaths, being still, and noticing what is around you.

Discover ways for you and your child to connect to nature and find moments of peace and relaxation, especially during times of uncertainty.

These exercises can be completed anywhere—from your window, while looking at a beautiful image of nature, in your yard, on your porch, on a walk in your neighborhood, or in a park nearby.

Step One: With your child, read through the prompts below and select one that speaks to both of you.

- Find a comfortable place and be still. Look around and listen. What do you hear? Are the sounds loud or quiet?
- Look around and find something that catches your eye. What color is it? Is it hard or soft? Why did it catch your eye?
- Choose a plant, animal, or object that is around you. Watch it closely. See if you can represent it with your body. Twist, jump, and sway if you need to!
- Look around you and try to find every color within the rainbow.
- Find a place where you and your child can sit comfortably. Look up and pause, look down and pause. Look side to side and pause. Did it feel different pausing in different directions?
- Pick up a natural object (pinecone, rock, leaf, etc.). What colors do you see? What does it smell like? What does it feel like (rough, smooth, heavy, light)? What does it sound like?
- Look up at the clouds. What shapes do you see? Make up a story and/or draw a picture about what you see.
- Find a comfortable position and relax every muscle in your body starting at your head and working down to your feet.
- Imagine your favorite animal. What might this animal look like when it is busy? How about when it is still? Try to act just like this animal, both when it is busy, and when it is resting.
- Focus on a small area. Close your eyes and see if you can remember everything that you saw! Open them back up to see what you remembered, and what you may have forgotten.
- Pretend you are the tiny seed of a plant around you. Crouch down and slowly grow towards the sun, and into what the plant looks like today.

Step 2: Begin each exercise with deep breathing. Breathe in slowly to the count of five, pause for a moment and then breathe out on this same count. *This helps our minds to relax.*

Step 3: Take your time to complete the prompt you and your child chose from above. You can practice as many prompts together per day as you'd like. The choice is yours.

Step 4: End each exercise by looking around and saying thank you to everything that is around you. Remember to take this time to thank yourself and each other. You can also reflect on the experience through art, creative movement, journaling, or just being still for a few extra moments.

More ways to be mindful and connect:

- Connect to nature virtually through live webcams: <https://www.explore.org/livecams>
- Check out 4 Weeks of Nature-Themed Yoga with the Conservancy and Venture Outdoors: <https://tinyurl.com/y676vds1>
- Utilize these free mindfulness activities for kids by Annaka Harris: <https://annakaharris.com/mindfulness-for-children/>