

Spring Sit Spots

Activity

Resource:

Beyond the Walls: Activities for the Outdoors

Grade(s): 4 5 6

Division(s): Junior

Setting: Intramurals

Season: Spring

Activity Goal

This grounding activity provides participants with the opportunity to slow down, breathe deeply, and focus on finding some quiet time during the day to reduce stress, relax, and refocus.

For participant safety, please review the contents of the [Beyond the Walls: Safety Considerations](#) page for information on Safety Standards, Spring Safety Considerations, and Outdoor Playing Areas and Surfaces.

Equipment

Recommended: 1 small foam square or towel to sit on per participant

How to Play

- Review the safety rules and activity instructions with participants prior to the activity.
- Establish the boundaries for the designated playing area and share them with participants.

- Plan for at least 15 minutes to complete this activity. Like physical fitness, mindfulness is a habit that takes time to develop. If necessary, start with a shorter duration and build up to a longer session as participants adapt to this type of mindfulness.
- Explain to participants that this activity uses the outdoors to help them focus on their inner awareness and their breath to destress. Encourage participants to have an extra layer of clothing to stay warm in the spring air.
- Explain to participants that mindfulness is the state of being conscious, or aware. When they take a mindful moment in nature, they are able to focus their senses to notice what is going on around them without distraction. It allows them to focus their senses on what is going on around them calmly, and with intention. They can still hear, see, smell, think and feel, but they are able to be present, in the moment, and allow the sensation of what is around them to stay with them a moment, and then pass.
- Direct participants to find a quiet 'sit spot' away from their peers, but within earshot so they can hear the instructions throughout the activity. Encourage them to find a comfortable position on the ground that they will be able to hold for at least five minutes without moving.
- Once participants have found their spots, have sat down, and are still, read the following script:
 - 'Sit quietly in your spot, first with your eyes closed, or with a soft gaze. Together, let's take five deep breaths in slowly through our nose, and exhale through our mouths. Do this silently and notice how you feel when the air fills your chest and lungs. Do it again, and feel it push your diaphragm (chest/stomach) down, and slowly exhale. (pause) Let's do it again. In through the nose, (pause) out through the mouth (pause). Repeat this pattern two more times and then slowly and gently open your eyes. Look around you. Without moving or touching, notice five things around you that you can see. (pause) Notice. (pause) Watch. (pause)'
 - Allow 30-40 seconds to pass as participants notice their surroundings before continuing with the script: 'Now bring your focus back to your breath. Continue with your breath in through your nose, and out through your mouth. Refocus your attention on the sounds around you. What can you hear? What do you notice? Can you filter out human-made noise? What can you hear in nature today? Take the time to notice four things you can hear but continue to focus on your breathing as you do it. Close your eyes if you like. (pause)'

- Allow 30-40 seconds to pass as participants notice their surroundings before continuing with the script: 'Breathe in through your nose, and slowly exhale again. Transition to a soft gaze and look around you at the glorious textures and materials. What are three things you can touch? Remember, we don't want to pull things out, or destroy them, but notice what interesting things your sit spot provides to touch. What do they feel like? Consider closing your eyes to really focus on them. Continue your focused breathing.'
- Allow 30-40 seconds to pass as participants notice their surroundings before continuing with the script: 'Continue this focus on your breath. Notice how much calmer your brain is already. Keep breathing in through the nose, and out through the mouth. Again, offer yourself an invitation to calm. Welcome the feeling of being at peace and in comfort with how you're feeling right now. As you continue to focus on your breath, draw your attention to the smells around you. What smells do you notice right now in spring, as the world around you awakens from a long winter's sleep? Notice two different smells as you continue to breathe in (pause) and out (pause).'
- Allow 30-40 seconds to pass as participants notice their surroundings before continuing with the script: 'Finally, as we get ready to continue on with our day, take a moment to center your focus on something or someone you are grateful for today. Focus all the love and energy you have in your body on this person or thing and hold it there as you breathe in (pause) and out (pause). Again (pause), in (pause) and out (pause). Take three more breaths just like this, and slowly, gently, open your eyes. Go forward into your day with a calm, peaceful mood, and be appreciative of the gifts we have been given on this day!'

Adaptations

Consider these tips to maximize the challenge and the fun for participants.

- To increase the physical challenge of this activity, consider incorporating simple yoga postures or seated stretches into each transition between the senses.
- Consider having participants re-group following this activity for a large group discussion on the things they noticed, and how they felt after having performed this activity. Encourage them to take a mindful moment just like this whenever they feel the need!

Modifications

Consider these tips to maximize inclusion and fun for all participants.

- For participants with core strength challenges, consider having participants lay down on their backs on the ground for this activity.
- For participants that may lack one of their senses due to a disability, consider altering the script to include an additional expression of gratitude, or of focused tightening/loosening of muscles (e.g., drop your shoulders, and relax your hands and arms. Notice how you feel when your muscles are relaxed. Now, tighten them back up and notice the difference.)