

Teacher Note: This lesson can be a great way to build a student's understanding of what is going on in their bodies. By teaching students this skill, you are equipping your students with a new tool to regulate and understand what is going on in their bodies at a given time. Play the heart rate prediction game throughout the week, especially after lunch and recess!



INTRODUCTION: YOUR HEART RATE

If I asked you right now to tell me how quick your heart is beating, do you think you would be able to predict the exact number of times your heart beats in one minute? Let's do an activity to get our heart rates up and then we'll see if we can bring them down.



ACTIVITY: FIND YOUR BEAT

1. Resting Heart Rate

First, predict your heart rate right now while we're all pretty calm. Write down how many times you think your heart is beating in one minute. Now let's measure our heart rate over the next minute. You can feel your pulse on your wrist or on the side of your neck – press down with two fingers and see if you can feel it. You might have to move your fingers around to find it. OK, when I say go, start counting your pulse. Go! Minute passes. Now write down your heart rate (we call this your resting heart rate since you're not active right now).

Raise your hand if your prediction was higher than your actual...Raise your hand if it was lower. Raise your hand if your prediction was within 10 beats? Within 5?

2. Physical Activity Heart Rate

Now let's do some physical movement in the classroom and get our hearts moving!

Have students do a minute of jumping or running in place, jumping jacks, etc. If it feels appropriate and fun, play some music.

Good, our hearts are going now – quick, predict your heart rate now. Write down your prediction. Now, let's measure our heart rate. Go ahead and find that pulse. Ready? Begin counting. Minute passes. Stop and write down your actual heart rate. Was your prediction close to the actual number of heartbeats? Did your heart rate go up after the physical activity? Why do you think it went up?

Raise your hand if your prediction was closer this time. Whose was further away?

3. Mindfulness Heart Rate

Finally, let's do a mindful minute to see what happens to our heart. Before we start, do you think your heart rate will go down or up? ... Right, down! Let's see how much we can bring our heart rate down by doing mindfulness.

If you have an established mindful minute practice, do that now – or follow the simple one below.

Take a seat in your chair or on the ground, close your eyes, and focus on your breath. Wait a few breaths. Notice how you're breathing. Wait. Notice how your body feels. Wait. Take three slow deep breaths through your nose and breathe out through your mouth.

Go ahead and this final time, predict your heart rate and write it down. Now, take your heart rate.



DISCUSSION: WHAT HAPPENED?

As a class, discuss:

- Were your predictions close to your actual heart rate?
- Did your predictions get better over the three activities?
- Was there anything that surprised you about your heart rate changing?
- What do you think is happening inside your body after the physical activity?



ACTIVITY: IMAGINE YOU'RE UPSET

It turns out that our bodies can help us understand what feelings we're having. Our heart rate can help us figure out what emotions we are feeling inside our bodies. We are going to do one more activity.

You can keep your eyes open or if you feel comfortable you can close them. I want you to imagine yourself getting upset. How does your body feel? Do you get tight muscles? Do you feel butterflies in your stomach? What about your heart? Are you able to actually feel some of those emotions you had just by imagining the situation?

Teaching Note: If working with students who have experienced trauma, it may be helpful to create a story that your students can use to imagine how they might feel. For example, have students imagine they are starting at a new school where they do not know anyone and are nervous about who to sit with at lunch in the cafeteria. How might their body, heart, and breath feel in that situation?



DISCUSSION: HOW DID THAT FEEL?

As a class, discuss:

- What does your heart rate feel like when you are upset?
- What about your heart rate when you are feeling happy and calm?
- What emotions do you think live at the slower heart rate?
- What emotions do you think might live at a fast heart rate?
- As you get better at predicting your heart rate, you get better at handling your feelings. Why do you think that is?



CLOSING REFLECTION

Teacher Note: Make sure to highlight that typically when our heartbeat is slower, we may feel calmer and more relaxed, and we can think and process our thoughts better. When our heart rates are faster, we may feel excited, stressed, anxious, or nervous. Also, make sure to mention that exercise is important to a healthy lifestyle and that having a fast heartbeat while exercising is normal and means you are healthy!