

Calm Down Keychain

A Lesson Plan/Worksheet from: SmoothRockMeditation.com

Age Range: 7 and up.

For younger children: Choose age appropriate beads with larger holes and use thicker string. Not suitable for children 3 and under.



Overview & Purpose

- Beaded keychains are easy and **FUN** for both adults and children to make.
- Just like beaded bracelets, they can be a great way to connect to your favourite calm colours and can be used as a **CALM-DOWN TOOL**. You can attach it to a pencil case, backpack, purse or keys.
- **Teachers** can have their students make **Calm-Down Keychains** and use them in **LESSONS** around positive mindset, attention focus, emotional awareness and self-regulation.
- Use as a **FOCUSSING TOOL** before test taking.
- These keychains could also be part of a Calm Corner in a classroom.
- By keeping it with you it can be used **ANYWHERE** as a gentle reminder to check in with your breath or use positive self-talk, when strong emotions or situations arise.
- Your **BRAIN BENEFITS** too.* Strong and stressful emotions can fire the amygdala (the fight or flight part of the brain) and this can be good, but you don't want to get stuck in the stress so **SLOW**, deep, breathing can help shift the focus to your prefrontal cortex

(the place where you do your thinking and creating). *www.thehawnfoundation.org, MindUp training resources.

- Give your body and mind a little break so it can **Reset, Rest, and Recover**.

Education Goals

1. Emotional regulation and awareness.
2. Empowering, self-care, brain knowledge.
3. Focusing the mind on the breath while the fingers sense the beads.
4. Creativity, small motor skills.

Objectives

1. Choose calming coloured beads.
2. Make a clip-on keychain.
3. Learn and practise a deep calm breath and how to use it as a calming tool.

Materials Needed

1. **BEADS**—assorted colours. I use wooden beads that are 10mm ($\frac{3}{8}$ ") in diameter.
2. The **STRING** is 10 lb. hemp cord purchased from Michael's (not an affiliate).
3. **KEY RING** with plastic clip—I got mine from Canadian Tire (not an affiliate). Also check your favourite Dollar Store. See the picture [for other options](#).



4. **SCISSORS**.
5. **SMALL TOWEL** or fabric so your beads don't roll away.

How to Make a Calm Down Keychain

1. Place your towel in front of you-this is your work area and keeps the beads from rolling everywhere. I used 9 beads in my example. Choose your beads, making sure that two layers of your string can fit through the hole.

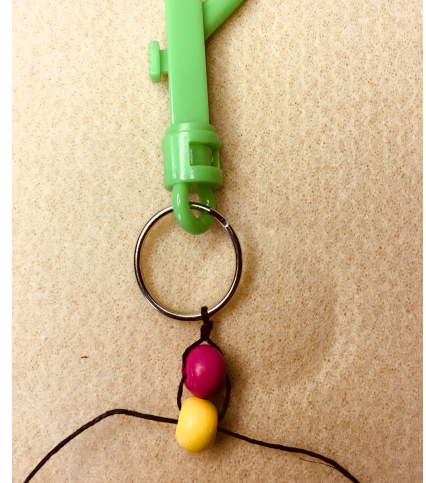
2. Measure and cut about a 20" piece of string, cord, thick elastic cord, shoelace or hemp. Fold it in half and tie it around your key ring.



3. String your beads-all one colour, a mix or a pattern, it's up to you-have fun. Thread one of the strings through the first bead from one side and then take the second string and thread back through, the same bead, from the other side. Pull on both strings to slide the bead up to the knot at the ring.



4. Continue to thread all of the beads, sliding each one up to the top. When you're ready to add the final bead go to the next step.



5. Final Bead. Thread the final bead as above but do not slide it up to touching the other beads. Leave a space that is at least a finger width or 1 to 2 times the size of the bead.
6. Final Tying. Take the two strings and tie a final double knot so the bead won't come off. Be sure to keep the space above the final bead while you make the final knot. You can also add a tassel here if you would like. I didn't do that.



7. Now try sliding each bead down to the bottom. There will be a space at the top. Then try the reverse and slide each bead to the top. You'll notice that if you stop half way the beads will 'lock' and stay where you left them. Go to the next step to learn a simple way to use your Calm-Down Keychain.



How to use your Calm Down Keychain

1. **Teachers (parents) can use the Keychain to teach students how to:** -calm down before a test
-focus before creating a project, artwork, brainstorming, problem solving
-tune inward to identify emotions and feelings.
2. **Use it as a Reminder Tool:** use this it to check in and notice what you're feeling and see if a calming breath is needed.
3. **Use it as a calm down tool with calm breathing.** See below.

First-Practise the Slow Calm Belly Breath.

With your hands on your belly try to feel your tummy expand out as you breathe in and slightly flatten as you exhale. Try to relax and don't force it. Another way to practise is to feel your lower ribs expand out. Let your mind follow the air moving from the tip of your nose and down deep into the body. Notice it turn around and flow back out. Remember not to force your breathing so you don't feel dizzy or lightheaded. Finally, breathe normally while you continue to remain calm.

Next-How to Calm Down with Keychain.

- While holding your keychain touch or slide each bead as you pay attention to your breath. Breathe in and breathe out a CALM feeling. Feel the texture of each bead as you move it.
- You can also think of a positive message or affirmation like, "I am calm, I am peaceful, I am happy, I am loved, I am smart, I am strong..." while you move the beads.
- Follow your normal, gentle breath or follow the bead with your mind. Remember to go SLOWLY and gently. Continue until all the beads have been moved to the top end and repeat, if you need to, by moving all the beads down to the bottom end.
- Just try a few beads to start and follow your own normal breathing rhythm.

There you go. You've just tried a calm down technique that can help you get on with your day. Use it before a test, presentation, when you try something new, or anytime you feel that you might need a calm down. You can use it anywhere you carry your keychain. Your body will feel calmer, be able to think more clearly, and your brain will thank you.