

stress **BUSTERS** for Teachers

The following tips can help you make it through the day with more ease and enjoyment.



“If a doctor, lawyer, or builder had 24 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn’t want to be there and were causing trouble, and they had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher’s job.”

-Donald Quinn

Have less than a minute? Push the “reset button” with these quick fixes.

- Do 3 shoulder rolls. Bring the shoulders up by the ears, back and down.
- The quickest way to relax is to relax the face. Let the jaw drop, the brow smooth and the cheeks melt.
- Turn the corners of the lips up. Yep, a smile. Even if it’s forced. When we smile, the body thinks we’re happy and sends in the feel good chemicals.
- Say a prayer, favorite slogan or mantra.
- Take 3 slow, deep breaths. Feel the breath expand the body on the in breath and relax the body on the out breath.
- Lead the class in a quick exercise break: March in place, dance (chair dancing is fun and not too disruptive) or stretch.
- Tighten every muscle in your body for 10 seconds. Feel the tension clearly. Slowly release. Feel the relaxation for 10 seconds.

It’s the little things

- Wear comfy shoes and clothes.
- Take time to talk with other teachers at least once a week. Knowing you’re not alone and getting fresh ideas can be quite a boost.
- Drink water. Staying hydrated reduces irritability and makes the brain work at its best.

And if you’re really serious about reducing stress:

- Commit to a daily yoga, meditation or tai chi practice. These are proven to greatly reduce stress when practiced regularly.

"I'll admit that I don't always eat breakfast but when I do I notice that I am less irritable and more focused." High School Teacher

Quick and yummy power breakfasts

- Yogurt parfaits— Layer yogurt, chopped fresh or frozen fruit, a sprinkle of cereal in a bowl. A good combo is vanilla yogurt, almost thawed frozen berries, Grape Nuts
- PB and sliced banana sandwich on whole wheat
- Trail mix and a glass of milk
- String cheese and an apple
- Oatmeal with cinnamon, ginger, nuts, raisins and chopped apple. Can put it microwave for 2 minutes.
- Hard boiled egg, whole grain crackers, banana

Lunches you'll look forward to

If you possibly can, chill out during lunch. Having a little quiet time can make a difference in the afternoon. To take a variation on a classic saying, "If the teacher's not happy, then nobody's happy." Moods are contagious.

Quick packs:

- Dinner leftovers
- A healthy microwave meal
- Stop by a salad bar the night before and make a big, deluxe salad
- A baked potato with cheese and broccoli
- Turkey or tuna sandwich.
- A bottled smoothie

Snack Attack

- A piece of fruit
- Carton of yogurt
- Granola or protein bar
- Handful of almonds, walnuts or sunflower seeds
- String cheese and crackers
- Hummus and pretzels or veggies
- Must. Have. Chocolate. A small square of dark chocolate is actually good for you. Or try trail mix with a small amount of chocolate in it.

Take the Magic Teacher Pill Every Day

The magic teacher pill? Exercise! Greatest stress buster, mood lifter, mind clearer. Ever.

Too busy? Exercising can actually save you time in the long run because you're more efficient.

- Walky Talkies—any time you talk to one person on the phone or in person, take it as a walky talky meeting, even if it means you walk the halls or the parking lot.
- Organize a before or after school exercise class or walking club with other teachers.
- Videos, Wii Fit, YouTube. Carve out some time in your home.
- Find something active you love to do. Zumba, Hula Hooping. Water aerobics. Archery. Bowling. Yoga. Pilates. Walking with your iPod.
- Get 30-60 minutes of exercise 3-4 times a

"I walk and talk with a teacher friend once a week. The walk clears my mind. We trade ideas and always have a good laugh about something that happened during the week."
Middle School Teacher

3 Classroom Management Tips to Reduce Teacher Stress

"When I'm exercise I have more energy and I'm less reactive. Things roll off me a lot easier."

Elementary teacher

Seating arrangement. A good classroom seating arrangement is the easiest form of classroom management. Students left to their own devices will often choose a seat that places the teacher at the greatest disadvantage! Students should be seated where their attention is directed toward the teacher. Assigned seating can be very effective.

Storytelling improves student attentiveness. Ears perk up when we hear the words, "I'm going to tell you a story." Tell a five-minute story about your first roller coaster ride, and by the time you get to the topic of potential energy, every student will be strapped in and following along.

Have some class rituals. Having class rituals can help classes start smoothly because students know what to expect. Rituals will vary based on the class content and level. Rituals can be work-related (a short assignment that students start as soon as they're in their seats), fun (some good music or a brief reading from a funny book) or 2 minutes of silence (you may be surprised by how many students like a break from noise and commotion). Having a cue for getting students' attention that is consistent and *catchy* has been shown to improve students' readiness to learn and on-task