

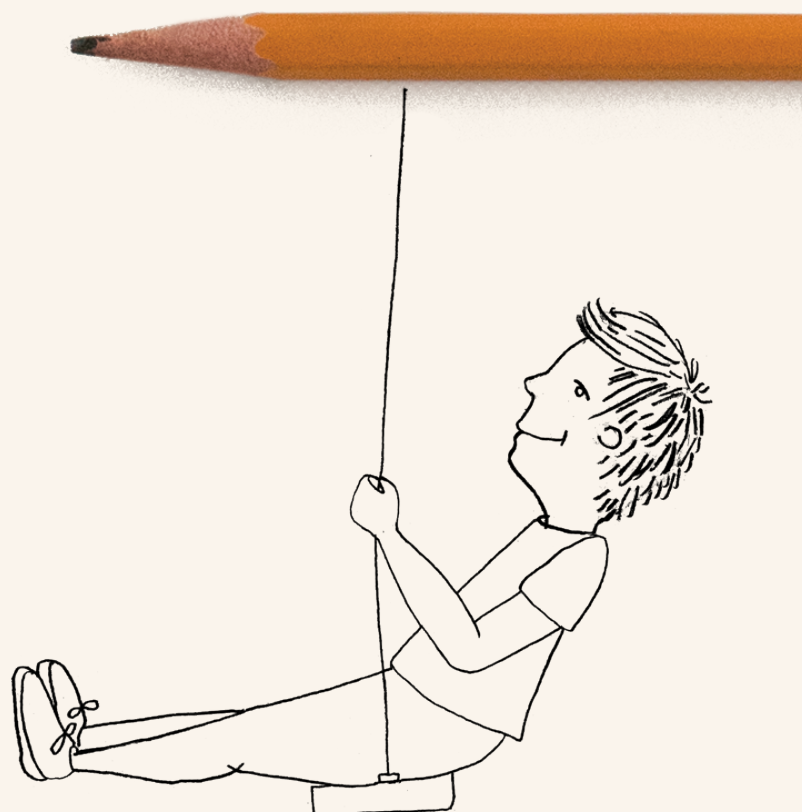


CONCORDIA
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-PORTLAND, OREGON-

Quick Classroom Stress Relievers

Innovative teachers like you keep students engaged and excited, but you know kids learn best when they're not stressed. Try these easy mood boosters on a daily basis.



BONUS:

Stress busters
for teachers
and parents, too!

Get Them Moving!

Sitting still is hard for all of us. These mood-boosting activities and brain breaks will give students instant energy.

Scissor hands.

Students stand and scissor their arms across their chest 4 to 5 times, then touch their nose with their right hand and touch the opposite ear with their left hand, then switch.

Super stretch.

Students stand up and stretch their arms and body to the ceiling, then to the side, then to the floor, twisting both ways.

Yoga pose.

Lead the kids in hero pose, lion's pose, mountain pose, tree pose, warrior pose, and end with three deep breaths in upward salute. (Google "kids' yoga" for ideas!)

Laugh in.

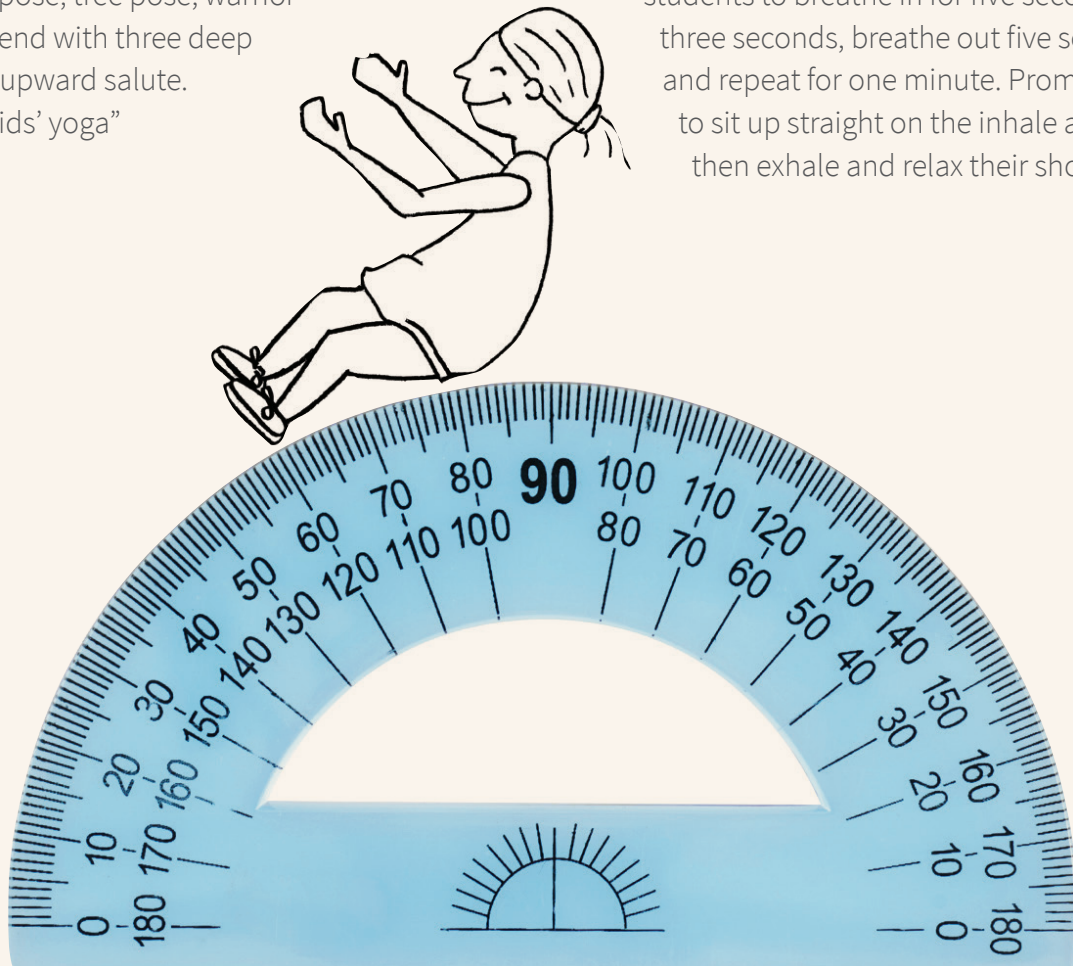
Start with "ho-ho-ho-ho" together. Then "he-he-he-he." And then "ha-ha-ha." Pretend to laugh. In no time the whole class will really be laughing.

Dance party.

Turn on some fast music. Dance your hearts out for two minutes. Turn on some slow music and stretch a bit and calm down for 30 seconds.

App it up.

Try Breathe Bubble in the Calm app (free in the iTunes store). Don't have access to apps? Ask students to breathe in for five seconds, hold three seconds, breathe out five seconds, and repeat for one minute. Prompt them to sit up straight on the inhale and hold, then exhale and relax their shoulders.



4 Stay-Calm Class Routines

Write out scheduling changes on a whiteboard.

Knowing what to expect helps students focus.

Take class outside.

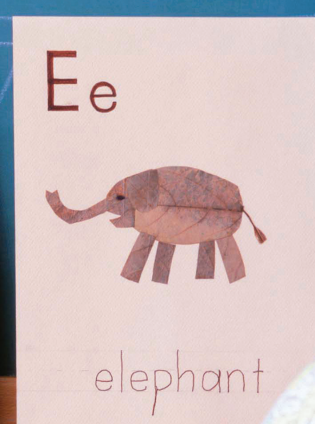
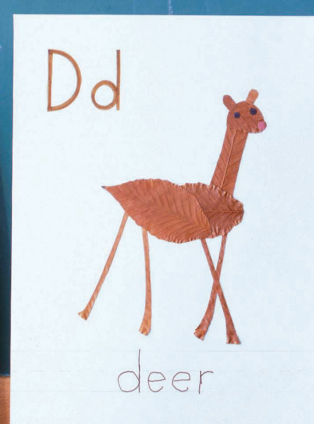
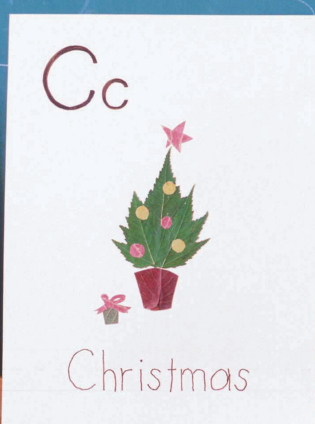
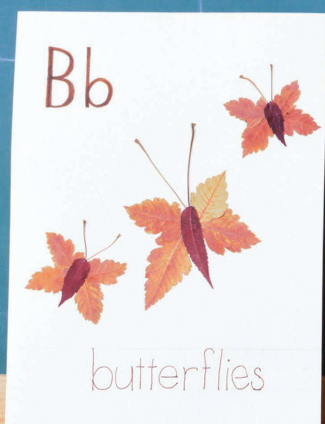
Foam mats from a home improvement store are easy to stow, soft to sit and work on, and sturdy and waterproof. No reason not to learn in the fresh air.

Build in rewards for getting work done.

Made it through reading groups with no interruptions? Give five minutes of free time at the end of the period.

Bring nature in!

Project a rain forest on a large screen and play rain forest sounds. One minute is all you need for a quick field trip in their minds. Tip: @nationalparkservice has stunning images on Instagram.



Brain Breaks

Activities that bring on the calm.

Create a class relax board.

Have students look through travel magazines or on travel websites to find pictures of places that they dream of going or that make them feel peaceful. Make a class collage that can be posted prominently. Model looking at the collage yourself so students get in the same habit.

Be classical.

Students working on a quiet task? Put on some classical music while they work. Productivity will rise and stress will go down.

Color (even older students will love it!)

Mandalas, patterns, or any printed-out design has been shown to calm students.

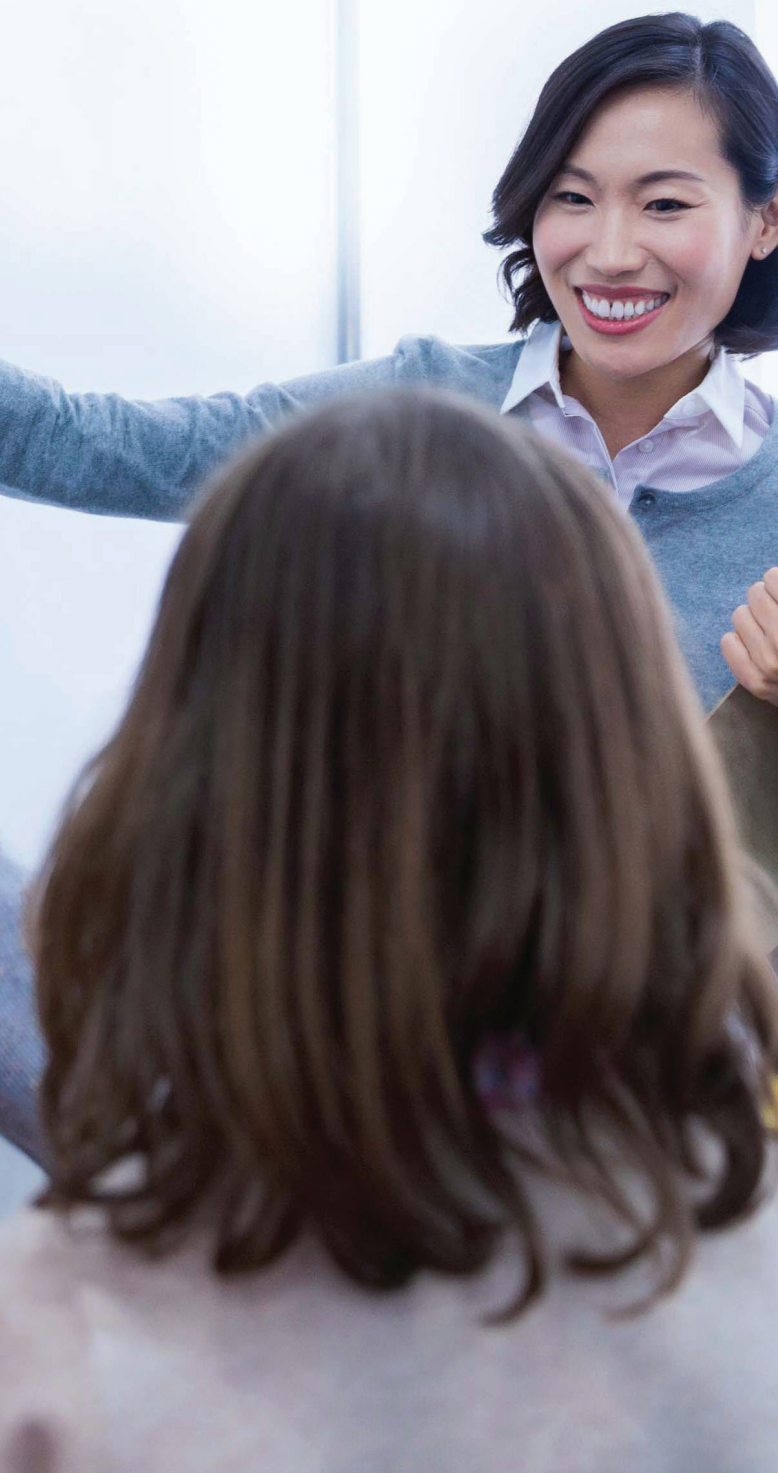
Have a daily check-in.

Let students hold up fingers to show how their day is going. 1, not so great to 5, fabulous. (And keep an eye out for the 1s and 2s. Check in with students to see if you can give them a little extra support that period or day.)



Take Five, Teachers!

You need a break, too. Sneak some Zen into your day with these stress hacks.



Imagine this.

First thing each day, close your eyes and imagine your day going well. Trace the letters C-A-L-M on your palm several times.

Find your happy place.

Do you love the beach? The forest? Post a photo of your favorite outdoor spot somewhere in your classroom. Channel calm by focusing on the picture and taking three deep breaths—in for 7 counts, out for 11 counts.

Sip smarter.

Forget coffee and soda! Buy a pretty insulated water bottle, keep it on your desk, and take mini H₂O breaks. A cold sip can work wonders on stress levels.

Think in threes.

When you're overwhelmed with tasks, prioritize: What three things must get done today, or during this period? Once you check those off your list, then add three more.

Celebrate success.

At the end of the week, grab a Post-it and write down one thing you felt went well, the name of a student you made progress with, and something that made you laugh. Put it on Monday's lesson plan. Every few weeks, flip through your plan book to see all your successes.

Schedule like a boss.

Try stress-free scheduling of parent volunteers. Sites like SignUpGenius let parents sign on when it works with their schedule.

De-Stress Tips for Families

Teachers, make copies of this list and send it home with students for parents to read.



Psst! Parents, helping kids relieve stress is a family affair. Sneak in these stress-relief strategies at home, and you'll help your kids be happier (and learn better) at school.

Serve a protein-rich breakfast.

Protein helps children concentrate and keeps blood sugar even. Good picks: peanut butter on toast, eggs, yogurt, milk, or cheese.

Build in hang time.

Sit on the front steps with your child for five minutes after school. Ask him once about his day, but don't expect to get a reply or give advice. Just listen, and follow his lead. Hug or high-five.

Leave it at the door.

Have a place for kids to write down things that were hard that day. Stuff them in a jar. Empty the jar each day. Talk about how each day is a new start.

Build homework routines.

Help your child break down her tasks and weeks with a planner or family calendar. Plan together so evenings are full, but not frenzied.

Go for tech-free meals.

Put phones in a basket at dinner (you too, Mom and Dad!). Make family meals a sacred time for conversation.

Keep kids off screens before bedtime.

To ensure calm, restful sleep, make sure your child turns off all electronics one to two hours before bed. The blue light from computers, TVs, and phones interferes with the brain hormone that induces sleep.



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