

Top Five De-stress Tips for Teachers

Stress is endemic in the teaching profession today.

And when that stress builds up over time, it can lead to burnout.

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and struggle to meet the constant demands from your job.

If you're suffering from burnout, then continuing on at work like normal can feel almost impossible.

This is why it's so important that we take preventative measures to ensure we don't reach this extreme point of chronic stress.

Here we'll be covering our top five tips for de-stressing from the pressures of teaching.

Our Top Five De-Stress Tips

1

Make a cup of tea

The simple act of making a cuppa can, believe it or not, be a very handy grounding technique.

What is an everyday habit can become so much more when you focus your concentration into the very act of making tea.

This is something you can do at school in the staff room, or at home after work.

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Select your mug, preferably one with a texture, colour or pattern you like.

As the kettle boils, trace your fingers around the mug, and bring all your awareness into this gesture.

Take a moment when getting out your teabag to feel the texture of it between your fingers, and smell the faint aroma from the bag.

Once the kettle boils, try pouring the water slowly and gently, really listening to the water as it hits the inner side of the mug.

As you stir the tea, pay close attention to the clink of the spoon against the mug, and watch the movement of the water circling with the spoon.

Immerse yourself in these sensations, and let this small act become a meditative moment to transport you away from your mind's busy thinking.

2

Socialise

Try and make the effort to spend time with friends outside work.

Working in a classroom environment means spending a lot of time with students who are much younger, so it's important to make the time to enjoy the company of people closer to your own age.

Many psychology studies have found that socialising can provide a number of benefits to your physical and mental health.

This can range from short term benefits like reduced isolation to long term benefits like a lower risk of dementia.

After working such exhausting hours, it can feel tempting to blow off any social plans to stay in and rest instead.

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While it's important to maintain a balance of rest and work, this shouldn't be at the expense of seeing friends.

Take the time to organise hanging out with the people you like and enjoy, the results will be more worth it than you know.

3

Mindful meditation

Through mindfulness we can learn to pay more attention to the present, and our thoughts and feelings surrounding our current situation.

With practice, mindful meditation can help you feel calmer and less stressed at work.

You may become more able to choose how to respond to your own thoughts and feelings, to cope with difficult thoughts, and also to be kinder to yourself and others during a trying school day.

Mindful breathing is a great way to ease yourself into this meditation practice.

Check out our mindful breathing exercise below:

1. Sit still, close your eyes, and breathe as you normally would
2. Notice the time between each inhale and exhale
3. Notice how your body moves and feels as you breathe
4. When your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breathing
5. Try to focus only on your breathing until the time is up

4

Go for a walk

Fresh air and exercise help to clear your mind.

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Walking also offers you more room to think and breathe.

Further to this, the act of walking is good at getting you away from the physical space that exists as a container for your problems.

For a teacher, this physical space is typically either your classroom or your desk at home where you spend countless hours marking and writing lesson plans.

Again, it is a small gesture that can make a big difference for reducing your stress levels.

5

Tidy your work space

Although it can feel daunting, investing the time to tidy your space can help with both decluttering physically as well as helping to declutter mentally.

Do you really need all the pens in your drawer?

Does it feel impossible finding the textbook you need as a class is just about to start?

Whether this cluttered space is your classroom or desk at home, once it is cleared and tidy it can help give you a sense of accomplishment as well as attaining peace of mind.

Sometimes nothing can alleviate stress faster than a sense of everything being in its place.

