Teacher Stress Tips
http://blog.havefunteaching.com/search/label/Burnout

Teacher Stress Tip Number 1 - Understanding Stress
Teaching can be one of the most stressful careers. Normally, the stress does not come from the students that you are teaching, but the before school and after school meetings and overwhelming paperwork. As teachers, we have so many responsibilities and so little time to accomplish them. When we can't complete our daily tasks and responsibilities, this can often translate into failure, stress and teacher burnout. Let's take a moment to understand stress that you as the teacher may be experiencing.

When you look at this picture above, do you instantly think, "That is horrible. Those kids should be sitting flat on their bottoms. That is so disrespectful."

PAUSE...Don't Get All Stressed Out!!!

Take what would normally be a stressful situation and turn it into something positive and fun! This does not mean, however, to be lazy and have no discipline. It's just an example.

Let's go over the feelings associated with stress, thoughts that go along with stress, and behaviors that you may be experiencing if you are stressed. Then we will discuss 10 ways to reduce teacher stress.

Feelings Associated with Stress:
- Anxious
- Scared
- Angry
- Frustrated
- Moody

Thoughts You May Have If You Are Stressed:
- Forgetfulness
- Fear of Failure
- Low Self-Esteem
- Worrying About the Future
- Can't Concentrate
- Complaining About Work

Behaviors You May Show If You Are Stressed:
- Crying
- Grinding Your Teeth
- Increase of a Normal Habit or Addiction
- Losing Your Appetite or Overeating
- Increased Heart Rate, Breathing or Sweating
- Trouble Sleeping
- Headaches
- Neck and Lower Back Pain

Ways to Reduce Teacher Stress
1. Become Aware of How You React In Stressful Situations
2. Be Positive, Speak Positive, Think Positive
3. At the end of the school day, think about all the things you achieved and finished rather that what you didn't have time to get done.
4. Learn to say NO to certain requests and after school duties. You can't do EVERYTHING, and you shouldn't!
5. Understand and Accept that a teacher is not a SUPER HERO and we do have limits. (Well, except for that crazy teacher in Kindergarten who stays until like 6pm every night!)
6. Find a Hobby and Ways to Relax at Home.
7. Exercise Regularly.
8. When you talk about your problems or issues regarding school, students, staff and administrators, make sure you are not complaining, but rather trying to figure out a solution.
9. Use Your Time Wisely. Evaluate how you spend your day, then make a weekly schedule and try to STICK TO IT.
10. Set Priorities and Realistic Goals.

**Teacher Stress Tip Number 2 - Create Personal and Professional Goals**

The important thing to remember when creating personal goals and professional goals is to make sure that they are attainable. It is okay to "aim high", however, when you set the bar too high it can end up being a stressful situation.

**Personal Goals for Teachers May Include:**
- Daily Exercise Routine - Staying active and healthy can reduce stress and may help you increase your awareness for dealing with stressful situations.
- Go to Bed at a Certain Time Each Night - When we don't get enough sleep, we tend to become short with students and other teachers. Students will pick up on this and become short with you, which then creates a vicious cycle.
- Enjoy Your Lunch - Your lunch time is meant for LUNCH. Many teachers grade papers or have demeaning conversations in the teacher's lounge. Try eating with your students once or twice a week. Lunch can also be a good time to sit in your classroom and just have some quiet time to organize your thoughts.
- Think Positively - As a teacher, it can be easy to formulate an attitude of pessimism, negativity, and hopelessness. This is basically because we have SO MUCH work and SO LITTLE time! As teachers, we must train our minds to pause, reflect on a situation, then respond positively.
- Slow DOWN - I am a people watcher, and when I watch teachers they are usually in a hurry to get somewhere, they are late arriving somewhere, or they forgot something. This is because teachers have so much to do throughout the day that we often lose track of our priorities and become stressed. To slow down, try listening instead of talking and taking random moments of silence to stop and reflect on the day and manage priorities.

**Professional Goals for Teachers May Include:**
- Leave Work at a Certain Time Each Day - Teachers often feel that with all the work they have and papers to grade that they must stay late each night. It is important to have a home/family life to partake in fun and enjoyable activities.
- Have Students Grade Papers - By having students help grade papers, they are actually modeling perfect practice by checking their own work. This will also create more time for you! This can be done as a whole group activity checking the homework from the night before.
- Get ORGANIZED - Organization is a great way to get rid of teacher stress! The only problem...it takes time to get organized. So, you may need to come in early or stay late one or two days during a week to get your classroom organized. It will be worth it! Organize papers into labeled folders, organize your classroom into labeled bins and tubs, clean off your desk. You can also organize your student's line behavior. Don't leave the room until you have a beautiful straight line. When things are organized, there will be less stress.

Here are some book resources to help you with Teacher Stress:
1. Breakdown: The Facts About Teacher Stress
2. Relieving Classroom Stress: A Teacher's Survival Guide
3. Teachers Managing Stress and Preventing Burnout

**Teacher Stress Tip Number 3 - Classroom Learning Centers**

If you are a teacher dealing with stress on a day to day basis, you may be working yourself to death! One way to minimize teacher stress is to create and manage small group classroom learning centers. Classroom learning centers will decrease the role of the teacher and increase the purpose of student learning. This will give you, as the teacher, more individual time with students. You will also feel a sense of relief as you are given more time to discuss student difficulties and you will be able to scaffold your students in their unique learning process.
Model Learning Center Behavior

It is important when creating small group learning centers that you model how to behave in a small group as well as discuss the different roles within the small group. Sometimes, small groups may require that students change roles as note-taker, writer, problem solver, leader, etc. When students are working independently in small groups around the classroom, it is easy for the teacher to walk around and monitor student learning.

Homogeneous or Heterogeneous Grouping?

Before setting up centers in your classroom, you must think about how you will structure your groups. There are two options for grouping. Homogeneous grouping is where each small group center has 3-4 students all with similar ability levels. Heterogeneous grouping is where each small group center has 3-4 students with one student being MIN, two students being MEETS, and one student being EXC. The exceeds student in the heterogeneous group will help lead and teach the group, which will also help the student understand the concept better. You may also want to give this student more challenging activities.

How to Set Up Your Learning Centers

- 3-4 students per group
- Separate groups to different areas of your classroom
- Length of Center Time: Pre-K through 2nd Grade = 15 minutes, 3rd Grade through 6th Grade = 20-30 minutes.
- Center activities MUST be self checking. Have an answer key provided so the students can check their own work.
- Students must have something they hand in. Center work is usually not graded, as they will be able to check their work and fix their mistakes. You can take a weekly grade for participation.
- Have 4-6 centers around the room, depending on how many students you have. After the time is complete, have students clean up their center to its original state and rotate to the next center.