

# Managing Stress

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However proficient we are as teachers, however prepared, positive, effective, and resilient, we are going to spend some up-close and personal time experiencing stress. How we address this can make a big difference in our overall outlooks, attitudes, and successes as teachers—and as people. Here are three ideas for lowering stress at school.

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## Take 5 Minutes

Take 5 minutes for yourself of unstructured time during the school day. Find 5 minutes, perhaps at the beginning or the end of lunch or during your planning time, and sit still in a quiet place. Close your eyes. Notice your breathing, without trying to change it. If your mind starts wandering, gently bring it back to focus on your breathing. As an alternative, take off your shoes, walk slowly around the room, and notice your feet and your connection with the ground. Purposefully relax your shoulders and your neck. Set a timer. You will be amazed how long 5 minutes can be. But taking just these few minutes can improve our attitude, resilience, and joy for our work.



## Limit Sugar



Stay away from sugar. It's November and we are firmly in the "sugar-vortex." Dump out all your left-over Halloween candy. Or mail it to our troops overseas by going to <http://www.halloweencandybuyback.com/>. Avoid the never-ending donuts and cakes and pies that magically appear in the teacher's lounge during this time of year. Sugar taxes the immune system and spikes our blood sugar, causing our energy to plummet and our likelihood of getting sick to increase.

## Set Work Limits

Set limits on working. A teacher's job is infinite. There are always more comments we can put on those essays, more prep we can put into that project or lesson. So set work limits for yourself. No grading or prepping after 7pm, for example. Or make two days a week your "me" days. For example, on Wednesdays leave school no later than 4pm and make the rest of the day a "work-free zone." And then take all of Sunday off from school-related things as well. The more relaxed and refreshed we are, the more excited and engaged we can be with our students. And, according to the research, when our students perceive us as relaxed and happy, they do better academically and their behavior improves!

