

You started your year running, and it has not slowed down. Classroom management and discipline seems to be ongoing, while lesson plans are never-ending. You have introduced the CTSOs, and just when you think you know your students, you get a new one who changes the feng shui of the class. You have been evaluated and gone to every meeting that you could have ever imagined. Now the holidays are upon you, the kids are getting antsy about a break, and you have heard more advice than you could ever put into practice.

Meanwhile, the clock is ticking to the end of the first semester and a major grading time. This is why teaching is considered a [high-stress profession](http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/be_your_best/page/top-10-stressful-jobs-america-14355387).

Sooo, what can we do about it? First, give yourself an award for making it this far. Second, know that all the things mentioned above bring stress to new and experienced teachers alike.

There are, however, some things that you can do to help you cope with stress:

* Take time to breathe. For five minutes a day, do something you like to do.
* Embrace the joys of teaching. When the “aha!” moments happen with students or yourself, take time to document with a selfie.
* Seek out collaboration. If you can share the planning, reflection and workload with colleagues you respect, the job becomes less stressful. Shameless plug for [Teacher Academy](https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/professional-development/continuing-teacher-academy) Jan. 30.
* Apologize when you are wrong -- to students, colleagues and parents.
* Laugh. Place a cartoon you like in your textbook or on your desk or make a link on your computer or tablet to funny short videos that make you laugh and look at them at least once a day.
* Just say NO. Saying no can feel awkward or uncomfortable at first, but the need to say no to gossip, procrastination, busywork and commiserating with negative colleagues can reduce stress and add time back to your day.
* Treat yourself right. Try to stay away from caffeine and diet drinks and eat more fruits and vegetables.
* Create boundaries to separate work from home. Politely refuse to take on more than you can handle, especially if it means that it will have to go home to get done.
* Be thankful. Think about the good things you have -- including a job.

If you can find time to do even one or two things from the list above, it will help ease the stress of being a teacher. I have attached a checklist that will help you distress. Just remember that summer is coming soon.