

# 12 Ways to Stress Less

## When It's Time to Assess

Help students relax before high-stakes tests with activities designed to boost their mood and relieve stress. We've compiled some of the most creative and ingeniously simple ideas from well-loved sites and bloggers around the web. With humor, physical movement, and more ways to engage the senses, this collection of activities has something for everyone.

### MOVE

**1. Stretch:** Room 421 recommends setting aside five minutes to stand up and stretch before a test to increase alertness. Easy yoga poses are also a good option to calm nerves.

Source: [Room 421 Blog](#)

**2. Dance Party:** Love to dance? Begin with a two-minute dance party to fast music and then slow it down for 30 seconds to get focused before a test. Bonus: Check out this fun [list of songs](#) to pump up your students before a test.

Source: [Room 421 Blog](#)

### RELAX

**3. Calming Jar:** Fill a recycled plastic bottle or mason jar with glitter and colored water for students to shake when they want to relax. Students can imagine the swirling glitter represents their assessment anxiety and begin to calm down as the glitter settles to the bottom of the calming jar.

Source: [Mindful](#)

**4. Visualization:** Have students think about a place that is relaxing and calm, such as a peaceful beach, and think of this place when they feel stressed.

Source: [Edutopia](#)

**5. DIY Stress Balls:** Using balloons, baking soda, hair conditioner, and a few other supplies, you can create your own squishy stress balls.

Source: [WeAreTeachers](#)



# LAUGH

- 6 Fill in the Blank:** In pairs or as a class, fill out a Mad Libs story that is sure to make students laugh. Bonus: Check out these [ideas for using Mad Libs in the classroom](#) to get started.

Source: [Room 421 Blog](#)

- 7 Laugh In:** To get the whole class actually laughing, start a silly round of saying "ho-ho-ho-ho" together. Then move on to "he-he-he-he" and "ha-ha-ha-ha."

Source: [Room 421 Blog](#)

Ha-ha-ha-ha!



# CREATE

- 8 Word Rock:** Have students paint a small rock with a helpful word such as "focus" or "confidence" on it that they can hold or keep in their pocket during a test.

Source: [Room 421 Blog](#)

- 9 Worry Warrior:** Students can create their own worry warrior using a cereal box and "feed" their worries to the imaginary creature. Then they brainstorm a way to conquer their worry with courage, take the worry back from the imaginary creature, erase the worry, and replace it with a Courage Connection.

Source: [Crayola](#)

- 10 Zentangle:** All you need for this basic meditative art form is a black pen and some paper.

Source: [WeAreTeachers](#)



# BREATHE

- 11 Deep Breathing:** Have students breathe in slowly as they count to four and exhale for a count of four.

Source: [Edutopia](#)



- 12 Practice Mindfulness:** This one takes some time to introduce and understand, especially with younger students, and works best as an ongoing practice throughout the year. In two minutes a day, students repeat a simple routine of mindful listening for one minute and mindful breathing for one minute.

Source: [Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley](#)

Lastly, don't neglect managing your own stress level during assessment time. Practice self care in the classroom with these [ideas from fellow educators](#).

