

Teacher's Story: Stress Reduction Routines

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My evening conversation class has established two steady routines. We write down our worries and put them in the bowl. We spend 5 – 10 minutes doing a stress release activity, which varies, each time. We have done a body scan, a guided meditation, sharing about our difficulties orally, laughter, diaphragm breathing, and the cross crawl. We established group rules, and we've taken to doing evaluations at the end of every class of the different activities and what particular areas people liked and did not.

The students favorite stress relieving activity so far was the guided meditation, followed by the laughter, body, scan, sharing difficulties, cross crawl, and the diaphragm breathing. The activities they liked they didn't want to transition out of; they reported feeling very relaxed and peaceful. They've gotten used to trying things and are able to try them with more fairness than the first few times we tried.

In my morning beginners class we've done active stretching including some basic yoga as TPR. We also colored mandalas. I've continued to start and end on time and build regular rituals into the class, things as simple as starting every class the same way, and always ending with dictation of 5 words. The students loved coloring the mandalas and essentially refused to stop doing them. A few very proudly and visibly wrote their names on them.