Back To School Microsteps

For Teachers

1. When you're feeling stressed, remind yourself why you became a teacher in the first place.

Remembering what motivated you to join this field can help you move through challenging moments with more resilience.

2. Once a day, remind yourself to remain open to change.

As uncertainty about schooling continues, being open to change helps decrease frustration associated with ambiguity. Science shows regularly reminding ourselves that change is a good thing can actually retrain our brains to handle it better.

3. When you feel overwhelmed by a problem at work, identify the smallest possible step you can take to address it.

Instead of trying to solve the whole problem, ask yourself, "What's the smallest step forward I can take right now?" This increases your sense of control and self-efficacy.

4. When you feel stressed, focus on your breathing instead of reaching for your phone.

We often use our phones to distract us from challenging moments, but this can leave us more stressed and more disconnected from what matters most.

Allow yourself a moment to turn inward instead and focus on your breathing.

To help students, parents, and teachers prioritize their own well-being as they return to school, READY SET has partnered with Thrive Global to create a tailored set of Microsteps—small, actionable and science-backed steps—that will help build resilience and improve physical and mental well-being. Learn more at getreadyset.org

Back To School Microsteps

For Parents

1. Set aside a specific time each day or week dedicated to school-related worry time.

Write down or reflect on your school-related worries and concerns.

People who actually schedule time to worry reduce their anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms significantly more than people using standard anxiety treatments.

2. Adjust your family's sleep schedule by a couple of minutes each night.

Many parents and families have adopted new sleep schedules during the pandemic — often going to bed later.

Start moving up bedtime incrementally to ease your child's transition — and your own. Even a few minutes each night will make a difference.

3. Choose a calming activity to habit-stack with the commute to school.

Listen to a favorite playlist, focus on your breathing, or sing a song together.

You'll create a moment of connection and calm for your child before the school day begins.

4. Ask another parent how they are managing the back-to-school transition.

Connecting with other parents who are dealing with similar stress will help you feel less alone.

5. Do one small thing each morning that brings you joy.

It might be meditating, walking, or having a cup of tea.

From this foundation, you'll build up strength and resilience for the day — and show up as your best self for your family.

READY SET RESET

Back To School Microsteps
For Young Students

1. While you are brushing your teeth, think of three things you are grateful for.

They can be big things, like people you love, or little things, like a cute animal you saw or a funny joke you heard.

Feeling thankful isn't just for Thanksgiving. It is good for your body and your mind, and reminds you of how much good there is in your life.

2. When you feel stressed or worried, pay attention to your breathing.

Paying attention to the rising and falling of your breath for even just one minute — instead of thinking about the stuff you're worried about — helps you calm down.

3. Each morning, say something encouraging to yourself.

You can say it out loud or in your head. For example, saying "I will have a good day today" or "I am strong" can help set you up for a great day.

If you feel stressed or worried later in the day, say it again to give yourself a little boost.

4. Connect with a friend who helps you feel safe.

If you're stressed, worried, or unsure about returning to school, talking to a friend can help you feel less alone. You may find that they are going through some of the same challenges you are.

5. Take a break from your tablet or phone an hour before bed each night.

Spending time away from your phone can help you get a better night's sleep so you'll be ready for a great day at school tomorrow.

Back To School Microsteps

For High School Students

1. Write down three things you're grateful for before bed.

Practicing gratitude is an easy way to feel good and take your mind off the stress of the day.

Try to think of three different things each night — they can be big or small.

2. Take a moment every day to give someone a compliment.

Positive vibes can help us de-stress in tough times. Let someone know you appreciate them.

3. Find someone who makes you feel safe and try to briefly connect with them each day.

This might be a friend, a family member, a teammate, or a classmate with a particularly grounding presence.

When you feel upset or stressed, it's important to share your emotions with — and get support from — someone you trust.

4. Listen to a calming or recharging song during a break or right after school.

Doing this sends a signal to your brain and body that it's safe to relax and unwind, helping you feel less stressed for the rest of the day.

5. When you feel overwhelmed, focus on your breathing instead of reaching for your phone.

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Allow yourself a moment to turn inward instead and focus on your breathing.