



Teacher's page

Fun lesson plans from Learn Hot English

How to deal with stress!

Level: Intermediate (B1) to Upper Intermediate (B2)

Audio: Yes

In this fun lesson, your students will discuss the topic of stress. This practical class will get your students using lots of useful language and all the essential skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Here are some ideas for doing it in class. Good luck!



1 Warm-up

Stress cures – **scroll down for the student pages**

Students look at the list of potential ideas for reducing stress. In pairs or small groups, they choose 3 of the ideas and imagine what they consist of and how they could help reduce stress. In some cases, it's more obvious than with others. Then, when they've done this, discuss students' ideas with the whole class.

For example: *Food & drink* **"They say that food like dark chocolate or drinks such as green tea can help relax you and relieve stress."**



2 Lesson activities

Go through the activities for the lesson on the sheet: the Pre-reading, Reading I and Reading II activities. You could do this lesson as a **listening** activity. In order to do this, tell your students to turn over the sheet so they can't see the text as they do the exercises.

Remember, for the first listening you should play the recording once without stopping so students get the gist of it.

For the second listening, if your students' listening level is low, stop the recording after each paragraph and check their understanding.

After finishing that, and if you've done this as a listening activity (not a reading), let your students read the text as you play the recording again. This is good for developing their listening skills as they can see the connection between the written and spoken language.

3 Follow-up activities

Retell it!

Assign a paragraph (or paragraphs) to each student. Students have a minute or two to try to remember the text. When they're ready, students try to recount the information, using as much of the language as possible. This works well in pairs, with you monitoring the language.

Presentation

Individually, in pairs or in small groups, students write up notes for a short one-minute presentation with ideas on how to relieve or reduce stress.

When they're ready, they present their videos.

Other students vote on the best or most useful ones. Alternatively, students could film the presentation on their smartphones and then show it to the class.



Dialogue

In pairs, students write a dialogue of a session between a psychotherapist and patient. The patient is looking for advice on how to reduce his/her level of stress. Tell your students to make the dialogue as funny, silly or serious as they like. When they're ready, ask for volunteers to act out their dialogues (using notes, not reading it out word-for-word). Other students listen and vote on the best ones.

Discussion: stress

Discuss these questions in pairs.

- What makes you feel stressed: people, work, not getting enough sleep...?
- When was the last time you felt stressed? Why were you so stressed?
- What do you do to relieve your stress?
- What was the last thing you did to relieve your stress? How effective was it?
- What methods have you heard about for relieving stress? How effective do you think they could be?
- Have you ever tried to help someone who felt stressed? What did you do or suggest? How useful was the advice you gave?
- Which people make you feel stressed? Why? Which people relax you and calm you down? Why? How?



Student's page

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1 Warm-up

Stress cures!

Look at the list of potential ideas for reducing stress below. In pairs or small groups, choose 3 of the ideas and imagine what they consist of and how they could help reduce stress. In some cases, it's more obvious than with others. Later, discuss your ideas with the whole class. For example: *Food & drink* "They say that food like dark chocolate or drinks such as green tea can help relax you and relieve stress."

- Food & drink
- Sleep
- Confidence
- Activities
- Supplements
- Fruit
- Herbs, oils, scents & ointments
- Tea
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Candles
- Caffeine
- Writing
- Chewing gum
- Friends
- Family
- Going out
- Laughing
- Smiling
- Saying no
- Prescription drugs
- Yoga
- Pets
- Cuddling
- Music
- Breathing



Objective To improve your reading and listening skills.

Think about it What do you do when you're stressed? What makes you stressed? Have you been at all stressed lately? Why? Do you know anyone who is really stressed? Why are they so stressed?

Exams This reading and listening activity will help prepare you for English exams such as FCE, IELTS and TOEFL.

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IS THAT THE TIME?



HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS!

When was the last time you felt stressed? What did you do about it? Here are a few ways of dealing with stress.

Stress is the feeling you get when you're under pressure. All sorts of situations can cause stress: moving home, financial difficulties, **work overload**, driving in heavy traffic, noisy neighbours, pollution, uncertainty...

So, what can we do about stress? Here are some possible solutions.

Smile: incredibly, your mind will often follow the lead of your body. So, if you smile, you'll be telling your brain that everything's all right, and your **mood** will improve. Next time you're feeling stressed, try smiling for 10 minutes.

Take action: deal with problems as soon as they **pop up**. For example, if you're angry with someone, talk about it and let them know how you feel rather than **bottling it up**.

Get organised: before leaving work at night, tidy up your desk and make a list of the things you're going to do the following day. When you get in early in the morning, check over the list and make sure that you can get it all done.

Prioritise: if you're feeling **overwhelmed** by all the things you've got to do,

make a list and divide the tasks into "essential" and "non-essential" items. Put the non-essential ones to one side, then deal with the essential ones one by one until you can cross them off the list.

Exercise: doing exercise is a great way of getting your mind off things and reducing stress. Go for a run, have a swim, spend some time in the gym, go for a walk...

Relax: find some time to really **switch off**: have a bath, meditate, get a massage, sweat it out in a sauna, do some yoga...

Make positive choices: read books that make you feel good and spend time with people you enjoy being with. Avoid spending too much time on social networks or watching TV, and stay away from negative people.

Get some perspective: learn how to **take things with a pinch of salt**. Is the situation really as bad as you're making it out to be? Is the work really as urgent as they say it is? Is it a question of life and death? Stop taking life so seriously!

Share it: don't keep your problems to yourself, talk about them. Chat with friends and try to laugh about the things that have been stressing you.

Focus: put 100% of your energy into the things you can change, and do your

best to ignore the things you can't. What's the point of getting angry about the weather, the traffic or the government?

Get a pet: studies have shown that interacting with animals is a great way of relieving stress and tension.

Eat well: make sure you have a healthy and balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables. And avoid too much alcohol and any stimulants such as coffee.

Take up a hobby: find some time to do something you enjoy doing: restoring old cars, building models, gardening, salsa dancing... anything. Doing something that lets you feel in control will help reduce the stress.

Feeling better? ☺

VIDEO

YouTube

Watch this video on dealing with stress. Search YouTube for "How to Deal With Stress".

GLOSSARY

work overload *n*

if you're suffering from "work overload", you've got too much work to do and not enough time to do it

a mood *n*

if you're in a good "mood", you're happy and you feel good

to pop up *phr vb*

if something "pops up", it appears or happens suddenly

to bottle up *phr vb*

if you "bottle up" feelings, you keep them inside you and you don't express them or talk about them

overwhelmed *adj*

if you're "overwhelmed" by a feeling, it affects you very strongly, and you don't know what to do about it

to switch off *phr vb*

if you "switch off", you stop thinking about work (for example) and start to relax

to take things with a pinch of salt *exp*

if you "take something with a pinch of salt", you don't believe it completely

Answers on page 44

1 Pre-reading

Think of four ideas for dealing with stress.

2 Reading I

Read or listen to the article once. Which ideas do you like the best? Why?

3 Reading II

Read the article again. Then, answer the questions. According to the writer, what should you do...

1. ...to improve your mood?
2. ...if a problem pops up?
3. ...before leaving work at night?
4. ...with the things on your non-essential items list?
5. ...to get your mind off things?
6. ...to switch off?
7. ...to help you feel like you're in control again?