

Online Resource 4.6 • Yoga-Mindfulness-Meditation Instruction Lessons

Lesson	Being Mindful of Stress
Length	20–22 minutes
Grade Level	Grades 6–12
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of “Stress Can Feel Like a Roller Coaster” (activity adapted from Turner, 2021) • Pencils or pens
Objective	To practice using mindfulness to recognize positive and negative stress
Opening	<p>Teacher says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our last lesson focused on recognizing when we’re feeling stressed and noticing how different breathing strategies can be beneficial in reducing the stress and anxiety we experience. Remember that we all experience stress and it is a natural response that is giving a signal to our body. When we learn to recognize the signal, we can use strategies and tools, such as breath work, to reduce our stress and help us refocus. Today, we will learn a new strategy, which is using mindfulness to recognize stress and develop healthy habits to help reduce that stress. • We’re going to begin by finding a comfortable seat. Remember that everyone is different and so you should focus on what feels best for your own body. • Feel free to close your eyes or gaze gently at what’s in front of you. Now, focus on your breath. Begin by breathing naturally and notice what that feels like. Then, take three deep breaths. Inhale deeply and hold. Now, exhale slowly. Inhale deeply again and hold. Now, exhale slowly. Last time—inhale deeply and hold. Now, exhale slowly. • Tune into how your body is feeling now. Do you notice a difference between how you felt before and how you feel now?
Sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions embedded in the “Stress Can Feel Like a Roller Coaster” article. This includes: • 5 minutes to read and reflect • 5–7 minutes of discussion with peers • 3 minutes of visualization • 5–7 minutes for closure (see the next row)
Closure	<p>Teacher says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We all experience challenges throughout our lives. Sometimes it feels like those challenges keep piling up, and other times you may just be experiencing a small challenge. While it may be difficult in the moment, remember that these times are only temporary. Similar to a roller coaster, we all experience ups and downs. When we’re experiencing the downs, it may be hard to remember it in the moment. When we are focused on a stressor or worry, it may feel like we are stuck. However, we can use mindfulness techniques to reduce our worries and stress. • While it’s important to recognize negative thoughts, you can use something called a positive affirmation to help you change your thinking. We’re going to try one now. Begin by lowering your gaze or closing your eyes. Listen to the affirmation and then repeat it to yourself silently: <i>I am resilient; I will get through this difficult time. I will inhale the good and exhale the bad.</i> (Repeat 3 to 5 times.)
Supplementary Resources	<p>Journaling is one way to further reduce stress and worry. You can use the prompts available from Journal Buddies (2021).</p> <p>In addition, you can adapt these prompts and encourage students to express themselves creatively through other art forms such as drawing and music. Here are some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw a picture of a something that brings you peace or joy. • Write a song about your worry or stress and what you can do to reduce it.

STRESS CAN FEEL LIKE A ROLLER COASTER

Part I: Read and Reflect (5 minutes)

Think about a time you were on a roller coaster. Do you remember the thrill? The uncertainty? The excitement? And maybe even the feeling of fear and concern.

Stress is a lot like that roller coaster ride. It has it highs and lows. There is good stress and bad stress.

The good stress, eustress, is a positive stress that propels us to take action. You might feel this before a big game, when preparing to give a speech, or when getting ready for a major event. This stress gives us energy to improve our performance.

Negative stress, or distress, however, involves worry and concern. It can even make it hard to concentrate or make decisions. It can lead to fear and a desire to escape or avoid certain situations.

Reflect on how good stress and bad stress might be like a roller-coaster ride. You may want to journal about this.

Part II: Talk With Peers (5–7 minutes)

Discuss ideas with peers.

Review and Guided Visualization

You can close your eyes or lower your gaze for this part of the activity.

Like a roller coaster, stress might involve an uphill climb—the anticipation—and the downhill drop, where worry and concern can take over.

You can use the image of a roller coaster to help you with stress.

Think about a big event and the stress of preparation. This stress usually is manageable and may even have some pleasant components as you imagine success!

Now, notice this difference when you are approaching distress. What warning signs do you have? Do you hold your breath? Is your heart racing? Or do you feel anxious, imagining the worst?

- Start by identifying your signs of distress. Just like that moment before the roller coaster tips over the peak, notice when you're just about to reach that teetering point.
- Then ***pause***. Take a few deep breaths; deep breathing will help you shift from a physiological state of anxiety to calm. This frees your brain to think clearly and help you decide how to proceed.
- How did you feel after the deep breaths?
- How could you use this in the future?

Less Stress Life Method Exercise

<p>Think about one thing you regularly stress or worry about. Then, answer the following questions:</p> <p>1. What are my signs of distress?</p> <p>2. Is my stress helping or hurting me right now?</p>	
<p>Spot Your Stress: In the empty space, name what you regularly stress or worry about.</p>	
<p>Unleash Your Options: In the empty space, write down options you can think of to help reduce your stress or worry.</p>	
<p>Respond With One Option: In the empty space, answer the following question:</p> <p>What is one action you can take to reduce your worry and stress?</p>	
<p>Figure Out What Worked (for later): Once you've had a chance to try out the action to reduce your worry or stress, return to this space and write down if it helped reduce your worry or stress. If not, what else could you try that might help?</p>	

Lesson	Using Visualization to Revise Negative Thought Patterns and Feel a Sense of Safety and Peace
Suggested Length	20–30 minutes
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 6–12
Materials	<p>“Guided Imagery: Create the State You Want” (Allina Health, 2015a)</p> <p>“Self-Guided Imagery Activity” (Allina Health, 2015b)</p>
Objective	To understand how guided imagery can be used to diminish negative thought patterns
Opening	<p>Teacher says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes we catch ourselves in a negative feedback loop. In other words, we keep replaying a negative thought or scenario over and over in our heads. When this happens, it can be tough to change our thought pattern into a more positive one. Today we’re going to talk about using visualization, or sometimes guided imagery, to change the negative feedback loop into a more positive one that helps us take action to reduce the stress or worry.
Sequence	<p>Teacher says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by remembering a time when you were stuck in a negative feedback loop. In other words, you kept replaying a negative thought about yourself over and over again in your head. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What were you thinking? ○ What was the experience like? ○ How did you feel emotionally? What did your body feel like? ○ Were you able to get out of the negative feedback loop? Were there techniques or strategies you used to help reduce the negative thoughts and move forward? • Maybe you already have some techniques and strategies that work for you. If so, great! Today we’re going to add another tool to our toolbox. This tool is called visualization, and it is a strategy that can help you get rid of the negative thought patterns. Now, I’m going to walk you through the strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begin by finding a comfortable position. It can be at your desk or finding a seat on the floor. ○ Next, close your eyes or look down toward the floor.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Think back to a time when you had a negative thought that kept repeating in your head over and over again and prevented you from thinking about anything else. ○ We're now going to listen to a visualization. [The teacher will play the visualization from Shanti Generation (2013).] ○ Take three long, slow, and deep breaths—in through your nose, out through your mouth. When you are ready, return to your surroundings and open your eyes. Complete a mind/body scan. Do you feel any different? How has your thinking changed? How does your body feel? Is it more relaxed?
Closure	<p>Please leave 10–15 minutes for closure.</p> <p>Teacher says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your shelter can help reduce negative thought patterns and help your emotions and body to experience a sense of peace and calm. Using the paper provided to you, draw a picture of the shelter you visualized. Try to include as many details as possible. Then, discuss the following with a partner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why did you choose to draw the shelter the way you did? What does it represent? ○ How might this shelter be helpful in reducing negative thoughts in the future?
Supplementary Resources	<p>Have students visualize an image of “stress” and “stress-free” environments using the “Create the State You Want” worksheet from Allina Health (2014). Students can share with a partner or in small groups.</p>

Retrieved from the companion website for *Cultivating Happiness, Resilience, and Well-Being Through Meditation, Mindfulness, and Movement: A Guide for Educators* by Christine Mason, Jeffrey Donald, Krishna Kaur Khalsa, Michele M. Rivers Murphy, and Valerie Brown. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com. Copyright © 2022 by Corwin Press, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction authorized for educational use by educators, local school sites, and/or noncommercial or nonprofit entities that have purchased the book.