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Press Release

10 Mindful Tips to Help Teens Minimize Back-to-School Stress

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OAKLAND, Calif., Aug. 16, 2010 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Going

back to school can be quite stressful. Here are ten tips that teens can use to incorporate mindfulness and minimize back to school stress.

- 1. Back to school preparation.
2. Notice your breathing.
3. Don't worry about school; it hasn't even started yet.
4. Doing one thing at a time.
5. Do things that you enjoy.
6. Reduce pressure and expectations.
7. Watch when you jump on the train of thoughts.
8. Appreciate who you are.
9. Be open to new experiences and see the same things with fresh eyes.
10. Use mindfulness when you do your homework or take tests.

1. Back to school preparation.

After being on summer break it might be hard to get back to the old routine of school. Perhaps start going to bed the same time you would when you are back in school and getting up earlier in the morning. It might make getting back to school a little easier. Also, eating healthy foods will help you feel good. When you eat, see if

you can actually taste your food, and notice your food, paying attention to what you are eating while you are eating it. Sometimes teens can be really rushed to eat at school; pausing and taking the time to enjoy your lunch and/or snacks might reduce your stress -- you'd be surprised. Some other helpful school tips -- Reviewing your class schedule, checking out where your classes are, going to the school if it is a new school to you and getting supplies if you can, might all help you feel more prepared to go back to school. Sometimes the fear of the unknown might be stressful and knowing as much as you can can only help, not hurt you. Also, you might not want to wait until the last minute to do your summer reading.

2. Notice your breathing.

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If you are focused on your breathing you are right here, right now, in the present moment, and you aren't in your head thinking about things that might be causing you stress. You don't have to change your breathing, just be with it as it is all the time. When you find yourself getting stressed, just notice your breathing.

3. Don't worry about school; it hasn't even started yet.

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Sometimes you might worry about things that haven't happened because you have the idea that it will change something in some way; unfortunately this is not the case.

Therefore, when you start worrying about the new school year, just notice that it is a thought and worrying about it will not change the outcome.

4. Doing one thing at a time.

When you do one thing at a time, you are able to decrease feeling overwhelmed by needing to do so many things all at once. If you have a large to-do list, break it down, doing one thing at a time. After you have accomplished each and every thing, acknowledge what you have done.

5. Do things that you enjoy.

Think about things in your life that you can do that bring you happiness or that feel pleasant to you. Even the littlest thing that brings a smile to your face could turn a bad day into a good day.

6. Reduce pressure and expectations.

Parents, teachers and friends can put a lot of pressure on you or expect you to do a certain thing or be a certain way. Try being who you are and realize that who you are is good enough. Notice when you start to put a lot of pressure on yourself. For example, when you are taking on too many school activities or trying to be perfect, just be who you already are. Don't forget you can also be the one to put pressure on yourself or onto other people.

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7. Watch when you jump on the train of thoughts.

As a human being you are going to think and think a lot, noticing when you are stuck up in your head and thinking about judgments about yourself or others can really be helpful to reduce your stress. For example, take a step back and jump off the train of thoughts you jumped on. You can do this by trying to just watch as your thoughts come and go and pass by as if watching a train go by without jumping on it. If you notice you have jumped on the train, you can easily jump off just as easily as you jumped on.

8. Appreciate who you are.

Often teens want to look or dress a certain way to fit in. When you feel like you don't match up to how you want to look or fit in, if you compare yourself to others, take a moment first and remember you, just like every person, are a unique person, and trying to live up to a particular image will likely cause you stress and make it difficult to be happy. If you can appreciate who you are and what gifts you have to offer you will likely feel more confident and a lot happier. If you don't think you have any talents, gifts or are special -- go talk to someone in your life you can trust and ask them about how they see you and what your special gifts are.

9. Be open to new experiences and see the same things with fresh eyes.

Instead of going in with thoughts that, 'a new school will suck' or that 'you wont make any friends,' try to see that new opportunities and experiences could actually be good or turn out to be better than you expected. Also, if you get stuck with that teacher you didn't like, again try to see that same teacher with fresh eyes. Don't get stuck in thoughts about how things are going to be; try to see how they actually are first.

10. Use mindfulness when you do your homework or take tests.

When you feel overwhelmed, pressure and/or that you can't pay attention to homework or tests you can try this: first notice your breathing. You might even say, "breathing in one breathing out one, breathing in two breathing out two." When you feel ready, pay attention to your body. Imagine letting go of any stress, tension or tightness you might have. Next envision doing and completing your homework or test with peace and ease, then give that homework assignment or test a try. If you begin to feel pressure or get distracted again while doing your work, start back at noticing your breathing, your body and visualize peace and ease. Repeat as often as you would like.

Gina M. Biegel, MA, LMFT is a psychotherapist in [San Jose, CA](#) ([CA - news - people](#)), who works with adolescents, children, and families. Biegel is director of research for Mindful Schools and conducts workshops and conferences teaching MBSR to a variety of populations. She is the author of **The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help You Deal with Stress** (New Harbinger Publications, 2010).

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