

First year got you down? Hang in there!

The first year of teaching is a year of “firsts,” as you establish yourself personally, financially and professionally. Learning to cope with the stress that accompanies these changes is critical to your success.

Experienced teachers have found that these techniques will help you cope:

- Keep a “things to do” list. Review it daily and do one or two things. You’ll have a sense of accomplishment when you cross something off your list. There are also good apps that allow you to organize and prioritize your “to-do’s.”
- Don’t procrastinate. Having something hanging over you can cause more tension than the project is worth.
- Don’t feel you have to do everything. Try to do a few things well each day and do the best you can on the rest.
- Keep up with paperwork, or it can ruin your love of teaching. Find a method that works for you and try not to create more paperwork than you need to assess students fairly and reflect on your practice.
- Schedule time for you. A refreshing walk, good book or creative hobby will give you a chance to revive and recharge.
- Leave your teaching at school. Complete the tasks you take home early in the evening. Better yet, try to complete your work at school and leave it there.
- Get plenty of sleep. Go to bed early if you’re tired. Try not to lie awake worrying about how you should have handled a situation in class.
- Find a friend who can be a trusted listener. Talking a problem out won’t make it go away, but it can relieve the tension.
- Observe good health habits. Don’t forget to exercise, and watch your vitamin and mineral intake. Eat wholesome foods so that your body gets enough calcium, potassium, iron, vitamins B, C, and D, and protein. The body calls on these nutrients for energy during moments of stress.

