

IDEAS

RITUALS FOR WARM-START WEDNESDAYS

Small midweek comforts to bring a little more light to the coldest stretch of the year.

Brought to you by your pals at

alpaca



MIDWEEK COMFORT, DELIVERED GENTLY

Winter weeks can feel long, especially in January, when the light fades early and the routines return all at once. Warm-Start Wednesdays create a small, predictable midweek lift: something soft and simple that says, "We see you. We're glad you're here."

Find an idea to try!

HOW IT WORKS



- Choose one calm, low-effort offering each Wednesday.
- Keep it consistent, optional, and truly pressure-free.
- Rotate between small comforts so people never feel like it's one more thing to "do."

GENTLE COMFORTS



Tea & Clementines Bar

Hot water, a basket of teas, a plate of clementines, and a small sign that says, "Take what you need today."

Quiet Lounge or Loudspeaker Playlist

Play a calm, upbeat playlist over the loudspeakers for the first 5 minutes before students arrive. It shifts the energy of the building instantly. If that's too much for your staff, or meetings might be happening consider playing it in the staff lounge or a place where teachers congregate in the morning.

"Words to Carry With You" Quote Basket

Print a handful of short, grounding quotes, fold them up, and place them in a small bowl in the lounge. Teachers can grab one on their way to class, like a tiny breath of encouragement.

Hydrate & Reset Sign

Set out a small sign near the water fountain or bottle filler: "Hydrate + Reset = You're Doing Great." It's a small touch that offers a quick boost mid-day and supports winter wellness. If you have a private space, consider offering cups so teachers can grab water even if they forget their bottle.

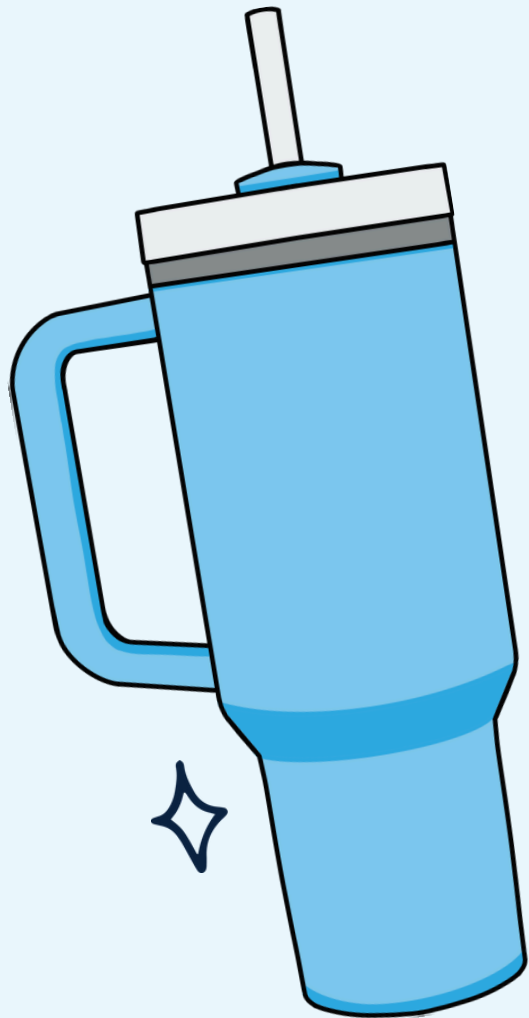
TAKE WHAT YOU NEED TODAY

 Thanks for all you do! 



**TAKE WHAT YOU NEED
TODAY**





HYDRATE + RESET

You're doing great. We appreciate you!



A Little Win for Today



Pick a quote you need today.
Keep it nearby as a small reminder.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You are doing
meaningful work,
even on the hard
days.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

Small moments
matter more than you
think.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You don't have to do
it all — just the next
kind thing.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

Your presence is
powerful.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

It's okay to move at a
human pace.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

Progress counts, even
when it's quiet.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You are allowed to
pause.

🌟 **A Little Win for Today** ✨

This work matters —
and so do you.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

Not every day needs
to be extraordinary.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You are exactly who
your students need
today.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

Breathe. You're doing
better than you think.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You can take this
one moment at a
time.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

What feels ordinary to
you can be
extraordinary to
someone else.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You bring calm just
by being here.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You are making an
impact, even when it
feels unseen.

★ **A Little Win for Today** ✨

You are allowed to
care without carrying
everything.

CONNECTION & COMMUNITY



Snow Day/Virtual Day Stories Board

Put up a small board in a hallway or lounge labeled: "Snow Day Stories (Real or Imagined!)" Provide sticky notes or index cards for staff to write down a favorite snow-day memory or a dream snow-day scenario.

Book Swap Shelf

Invite staff to place a finished book they loved (any genre) on a small shelf with a Post-it note that says why they enjoyed it. It sparks connection without a meeting or commitment.

Hallway Hellos Challenge

Choose one day where everyone tries to greet five colleagues they don't usually run into — a simple nod, smile, or "Good morning."

Collaborative Doodle Board

Put up a giant piece of butcher paper with a few doodles to start. Invite staff to add a line, shape, or color when they pass by. By the end of the month, it becomes a joyful, collective mural.

Winter Playlist Swap

Ask staff to contribute one song that lifts them up in winter. Combine them into a shared playlist — an instant mood booster and an easy conversation starter.

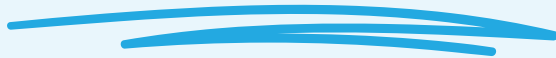
SNOW DAY STORIES



BOOK SWAP

LOVED IT. FINISHED IT. PASS IT ON.

**Finished a book you loved? Leave
the book here with a short note
about why you recommend it.**



Winter Playlist Swap

Add a song that lifts you up in winter!

[illegible]

SMALL SPARKS OF WELL-BEING



Mini Movement Moments (short stretch or walk challenges)

Post a weekly optional challenge with gentle prompts that help bodies wake back up in the cold. Check out our examples to get started.

"Try One Tiny Thing" January Challenge

Instead of big resolutions, invite teachers to try one small shift this month that makes their day easier or lighter. Pick one tiny thing (2–5 minutes) to try, then reflect after two weeks on what worked. Check out our examples and share them with your team!

Warm Welcome Notes

Leave small handwritten or printed notes in staff spaces with simple messages of care. These notes aren't about tasks or reminders; they quietly remind teachers they are seen and valued during the cold, busy weeks of January. Check out our examples and leave one on a desk, in a mailbox, or in the lounge to brighten someone's day.

One Minute Reset Cards

Invite your staff to pause and recharge with our small [Mindful Minutes](#). These one-minute prompts use simple breathing, gratitude, and reflection cues to bring focus and steadiness into the day. Teachers can grab one whenever things feel heavy for a quick reset. Check out our ready-to-go resource to get started.

Mini-Movement Challenge

Movement doesn't have to be big to matter. **Choose one** small way to wake up your body this week, or simply notice how you're already moving.



- Take a 2-minute hallway walk between classes or during planning.
- Do three slow shoulder rolls before your next task.
- Stand up and stretch your arms overhead like you're reaching for the ceiling.
- Walk to the farthest water fountain instead of the closest one.
- Try five desk stretches (neck, wrists, ankles).
- Take 10 deep breaths while standing by a window or door.
- Do a gentle twist in your chair and switch sides.
- Take the long way to the copier or office — no rush.
- Do five calf raises while waiting for copies.
- Shake out your hands and arms for 20 seconds to release tension.
- Step outside for one minute of fresh air, if possible.
- Do a wall push-up or gentle lean stretch.
- Roll your ankles slowly while seated.
- Reset your posture: feet flat, shoulders down, jaw relaxed.
- Walk one lap around your classroom before students arrive.

Try One Tiny Thing

Instead of big resolutions, try one tiny shift that makes your day feel lighter. Choose one small thing to try for two to five minutes, then notice what works and what doesn't.



- Take two slow breaths before greeting students each morning
- Write one kind note for yourself or a colleague
- Start the day with one calming song or sound
- Use one restorative question before a redirection
- Pause for 30 seconds of quiet before dismissal
- Tidy one small surface only, then stop
- Drink a full glass of water before your first class
- Step into the hallway for one minute of fresh air
- Choose one routine to simplify for the week
- End the day by naming one thing that went okay
- Sit down during one transition instead of rushing
- Use a timer to take one intentional two-minute break
- Take three shoulder rolls between classes
- Greet one student by name with extra intention
- Set out tomorrow's materials before leaving today
- Silence notifications for five minutes
- Stand in natural light for two minutes
- Leave one email for tomorrow
- Choose one thing to let go of this week

Warm Welcome Note Prompts



- Something I appreciate about you...
- A small moment where I saw your impact...
- Thank you for the way you...
- One quiet strength you bring to our school...
- A moment this week that made me think of you...
- Something you do that makes this place better...
- A way you showed care for students or colleagues...
- What I'm grateful for when I think about your work...
- One reason our school is better because you're here...
- A small thing you do that has a big impact...
- A reminder you might need today...
- One word that describes the way you show up...

COLLABORATION

BUILT BY EDUCATORS, FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

This resource was created in collaboration with dedicated educators and school leaders who brought their experience, ideas, and insight to every step of the process. We're grateful for their partnership in building tools that truly make a difference in schools.



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WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

Thanks for downloading this resource—at [Alpaca](#), we're on a mission to **make school the happiest place to work**.



Tried an activity?

Send a photo or a staff testimonial to [our team](#), and we'll send you a coffee on us!



Got an idea brewing?

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