

Quick Wins Guide: 8 Evening Tips For ECTS

Evenings as an Early Career Teacher can feel overwhelming, with planning, marking, and endless to-dos taking over your time and energy. The good news is, you don't have to do it all to be effective — small, simple changes can make a big difference. This Quick Wins Guide gives you eight practical tips you can start using straight away to protect your wellbeing, save time, and build sustainable habits that support your confidence in the classroom.

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The Thirty Minute Rule

The 30-Minute Rule Work in focused 30-minute bursts, then stop. It keeps you efficient and prevents hours slipping away. This method also gives your brain natural breaks, helping you return fresher for the next task.

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The Top 3

Write down just three priorities for the evening. If you tick those off, you've won. This keeps your workload realistic and reduces overwhelm.



The Next Day Test

Ask yourself: Will this really make a difference tomorrow? If not, park it. This prevents you from wasting energy on tasks that aren't urgent or impactful.



The Shutdown Ritual

Create a 'close down' routine: pack your bag, jot down tomorrow's tasks, close the laptop. Signal to your brain: work is done. A consistent ritual helps you mentally separate work from home life.



Start With The Hardest

Tackle the task you're dreading first. It frees up mental space and makes the rest feel easier. Once it's done, you'll feel a sense of achievement and lighter for the evening.



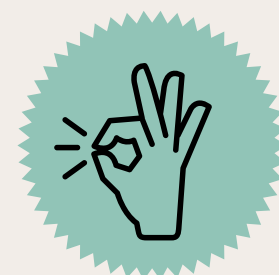
Batch Work

Group similar tasks together — mark all at once, plan all at once. No more switching between jobs and losing focus. Batching builds momentum and helps you finish faster.



Limit The Extras

Don't say 'yes' to every worksheet, display or email. Protect your time and energy. Boundaries now mean better balance and less burnout later.



Done > Perfect

A good-enough plan is always better than a 'perfect' plan that costs you hours. Students benefit more from your energy than your perfectionism. Perfectionism slows you down and steals your evenings.

Remember, these quick wins aren't about doing more — they're about working smarter and protecting your energy so you can show up as the best version of yourself in the classroom. Start small, stay consistent, and celebrate the progress you make along the way. Over time, these strategies help you establish healthy habits that make evenings your own again, rather than an extension of the school day. The goal is to build a rhythm where you feel confident enough to switch off, knowing the important work is done, and gradually move towards leaving schoolwork at school altogether. You're building habits now that will carry you through your whole teaching career — and you've absolutely got this!

