



RADICAL REALIGNMENT · THE BODY

Nervous System Regulation

*A guided workbook for understanding, calming, and
rebuilding trust with your own nervous system.*

Self Align *by Design*

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I. NEUROLOGICAL ESSENTIALS

The Human Nervous System

Your nervous system is built in two halves that constantly talk to each other — one commanding, one carrying out.

Central Nervous System

Brain — command center: processing, decisions, emotion regulation.

Spinal cord — message relay between brain and body.

Peripheral Nervous System

Somatic — voluntary movement, sensory info, muscle control.

Autonomic — involuntary functions, homeostasis. Splits into sympathetic ("fight or flight") and parasympathetic ("rest and digest").

I. NEUROLOGICAL ESSENTIALS

The Parasympathetic System

Your body is always working to keep things stable — a state called *homeostasis*. The parasympathetic nervous system is the calm, restful side of that balance, helping you recover once the day's demands have passed.

Heart — slows heartbeat

Lungs — deeper, fuller breaths

Eyes — pupils shrink to relax

Brain — supports calm and peace

Digestive system — stimulates digestion & gut movement

Muscles — decreases tension, promotes relaxation

The Vagus Nerve

The vagus nerve is cranial nerve X — the longest nerve of the autonomic nervous system. It runs from your brainstem down through the body, connecting to your heart, lungs, and digestive tract.

When things get intense, the vagus nerve is what activates the parasympathetic system — basically hitting the "chill out" button for your body. It tells your heart to take it easy, and your breathing to slow down.

I. NEUROLOGICAL ESSENTIALS

Polyvagal Theory: The Three Gears

Green Gear — Social Engagement (Ventral Vagus)

Calm, connected, and safe — you can chat, laugh, and be fully present.

Yellow Gear — Mobilization (Sympathetic)

Action mode. Heart races, senses sharpen, ready to fight or escape.

Red Gear — Immobilization (Dorsal Vagus)

Freeze. The body shuts down and disconnects when danger feels overwhelming.

Introduced by Dr. Stephen Porges — no gear is wrong. Each is your body doing exactly what it was built to do.
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II. ASSESS & ADDRESS

Regulation, Dysregulation & Co-Regulation

Regulation

Managing your emotional and physical state — shifting from high stress to calm, or from lethargy to alert.

Dysregulation

Struggling to manage your emotional state, which over time can strain health and relationships.

Co-Regulation

People supporting each other to find balance and calm — like a couple comforting each other after a hard day.

REFLECT

- When did you last feel truly regulated? What did that feel like in your body?
- Who helps you feel calm and safe when you're stressed?

III. REGULATION & RESILIENCE

Resilience: The Path to Inner Strength

Resilience is an anchor for your mental well-being — your ability to maintain or quickly regain balance when facing difficulty.

- Foster supportive networks
- Practice reflective growth
- Prioritize self-care
- Define your purpose
- Embrace a positive outlook
- Act proactively

REFLECT

- Think of a challenging time. What helped you get through it?
- What strategies, thoughts, or people supported you?

IV. ACTIVE REGULATION

Techniques to Engage the Vagus Nerve

Deep Breathing

Inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 6. Repeat 5–10 cycles, twice daily.

Facial Contouring

Warm your hands, rest them on your face, and playfully reshape your expression.

Tongue Release

Open wide to stretch the throat, then explore the mouth gently with your tongue.

Butterfly Hug

Cross your arms, hands on opposite collarbones, and tap left-right for 8 counts.

The Power of Hugging

Releases oxytocin, relaxes muscles, and reduces stress and pain.

Swallowing Exercises

Let saliva gather, then swallow mindfully up to 20 times, chin down.

Humming & Toning

Lie down and hum for 7 minutes, feeling the vibration through your chest and neck.

Eye Massage

Gently press closed eyelids with your palms to slow heart rate and calm the body.

Soothing Hand Positions

One hand on heart, one on abdomen (or forehead/skull) for 5–15 minutes.

Breath Meditation

Focus on your breath's natural rhythm for 10–15 minutes daily.

Coping Skills You Can Practice Right Now

Breathing

Deep, slow breaths from your core; exhale gradually.

Visualization

Imagine or view serene scenes — beaches or mountains.

Music

Listen to soothing or uplifting music.

Comfort Item

Snuggle with a blanket or something comforting.

Movement

Shift your focus through physical activity.

Relaxation

Muscle relaxation, a warm bath, or yoga.

Interact

Reach out for enjoyable conversation with others.

Amuse Yourself

Gaming, puzzles, cooking, reading.

Reflect on Success

Acknowledge your efforts and accomplishments.

Address Challenges

Consider concrete steps to work through issues.

Spirituality

Prayer, ritual, or activities connecting you to purpose.

Imagery

Focus on calming visuals, real or in your mind's eye.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Three things I'm grateful for today are...

Your nervous system isn't something to fix. It's something to understand, and to keep coming home to.