



BODY CALMING TECHNIQUES

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The Nervous System

The nervous system can be thought of as having three levels.

- Level 1 i.e. The lower level is the Body (Gut Brain & Heart Brain).
- Level 2 is the Emotional Brain.
- Level 3 is the Thinking Brain (Cerebral Cortex).

Lower levels are more primitive, and the higher levels developed later in our evolution.

The Body – The Vagus Nerve

There is a two-way highway allowing communication between the lower and higher levels. The BODY, through its language of physical sensations, provides the higher levels important information. The BODY directly influences higher levels of the nervous system and influences what EMOTIONS and THOUGHTS are produced. The vagus nerve is one of the primary ways by which the BODY provides information to the upper levels. The vagus nerve is this big cable-like nerve that runs from the brain stem or back of neck, down the body, connecting our face, voice, hearing, heart, and intestines.

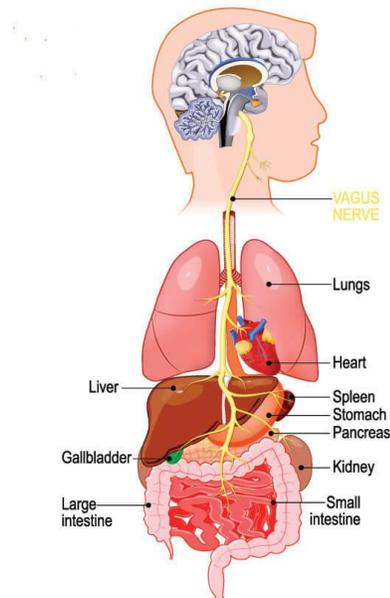


Figure 1 - Source: Internet

A BODY in chronic stress response is in a constant state of activation, rather than in the state of relaxed alertness. The stress response or activation can be either a state of mobilization - fight / flight or immobilization - freeze. That is like a car always driving 200km/hour, when it should be driving 60 km/ hour. The baseline in a healthy person should be a state of RELAXED & READY or a car driving at 60 km/hour.

Can you imagine how much wear and tear that car would endure with driving at 200km/hour all the time? Do you think the car would last as long? Many chronic diseases are associated with chronic stress and the vagus nerve connection helps explain much of the connection. Remember the vagus nerve runs from the intestines, heart, face, hearing and brain stem (back of neck). Some examples of health conditions associated with chronic stress include Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Heart Disease, High Blood Pressure, Migraine, Fibromyalgia, Depression, Anxiety and PTSD.

The Thinking Brain

The ultimate goal of the Thinking Brain is creating coherence in the entire system. In a state of coherence, the goal is not only to survive and pro-create but also thrive. The information the thinking brain receives from the BODY greatly affects what the brain does to try to achieve coherence.

Body Calming Techniques

The techniques in this handout work on the BODY – Autonomic Nervous System. Specifically, it helps increase vagus nerve tone and allows the body to experience safety. This is the state of RELAXED & READY.

- We cannot talk our way out of a sense of feeling unsafe. We have to work with the BODY and repeatedly have the body experience safety. The body will then communicate this safety to the brain.

Short practices of 1-2 minutes repeatedly will change the baseline from a state of activation (200 km/hour) to a healthier baseline - relaxed and ready (60 km/hour).

1. 4-7-8 Breathwork



Figure 2 - Source: Internet

4: Breathe in through nose, as though smelling your favourite flowers & up your belly with this air like a balloon.

7: Hold for 7.

8: Breathe out through the mouth, like blowing out 8 birthday candles.

2. Mother Speak



Figure 3

Use your first name and talk to yourself in a **melodic voice**, in the same way a mother would talk to an upset baby. Combine this technique with any of the techniques below.

3. Safe & Secure in the Cradle



Figure 4

Lie down in bed and notice the mattress and pillow supporting your neck, shoulders blades and back. Cover yourself with a heavy blanket and tuck in the sides. Use side pillows for additional feelings of safety and security.

4. Rocking back and forth

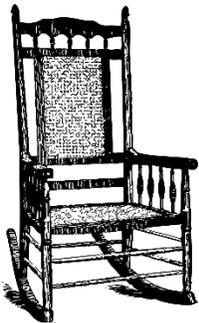


Figure 5 – Source: Internet

5. Self holding exercises - Touch & Pressure



Figure 6 - Source: Internet



Figure 7 - Source: Internet

