

Understanding Your Nervous System

A Mini Guide to Regulate, Restore & Thrive



What Is the Nervous System?

Your nervous system is your body's communication network. It controls how you respond to stress, rest, digest, and connect with others.

It has two main branches:

- Sympathetic — your 'fight or flight' response
- Parasympathetic — your 'rest and digest' mode

Understanding these states helps you recognise what your body needs in each moment.



Fight, Flight & Freeze

When your nervous system detects danger — real or perceived — it activates a survival response.

- Fight — irritability, tension, anger, need to control
- Flight — anxiety, overthinking, restlessness, avoidance
- Freeze — numbness, shutdown, dissociation, fatigue

These are not flaws. They are protective mechanisms your body learnt to keep you safe.



Signs Your Nervous System Needs Support

Your body is always communicating. Here are some signs it may be stuck in a stress response:

- Difficulty sleeping or waking exhausted
- Feeling overwhelmed by small tasks
- Digestive issues or tension headaches
- Emotional reactivity or numbness
- Struggling to focus or make decisions
- Constant need to stay busy (or inability to move)

Noticing these patterns is the first step towards regulation.

Simple Regulation Tools



When you notice dysregulation, try one of these gentle practices:

- Physiological sigh — double inhale through the nose, long exhale through the mouth
- Cold water on wrists or face to activate the vagus nerve
- Grounding — name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear
- Gentle movement — shaking, stretching, or slow walking
- Co-regulation — being near a calm, safe person

Start with one. Consistency matters more than intensity.



**You are not broken.
Your nervous system is doing
its best to protect you.**

Healing begins with awareness.

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