



11 Essential Tools to Regulate Your Nervous System

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About the Author

My name is Tannaz Hosseinpour, founder of [Minutes on Growth Coaching](#) and host of the *Minutes on Growth* Podcast. I am deeply passionate about empowering individuals on their journey to healing and self-discovery.

Currently, I'm completing my third master's degree, this time in Counseling Psychotherapy, which further deepens my understanding of the human mind and the complexities of emotional well-being. For over 15 years, I have studied the intricacies of the mind-body-soul connection, and for the past 7 years, I've been dedicated to teaching these principles to help people bring balance into their lives.

My approach is holistic, emphasizing that true healing happens when we honor the interconnectedness of our thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. I believe that mental health resources should be accessible to everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances. This belief drives me to offer a range of services, including 1:1 coaching, group programs, and transformative retreats held around the world. My goal is to guide you toward a more peaceful, grounded state of being, using simple tools and techniques that are both practical and profoundly transformative.

Introduction

In our modern world, our minds and bodies are often bombarded with stressors that can leave us feeling overwhelmed and out of balance. From the constant scrolling through social media feeds to witnessing distressing news about conflicts and crises, our nervous systems are in a state of heightened alert. Even when we're not directly involved, the emotional toll of second-hand trauma from seeing these events can spike our stress levels and impact our overall well-being.

At the core of how we experience stress lies the autonomic nervous system (ANS), which controls our body's involuntary functions like heart rate, digestion, and breathing. The ANS has two key components: the sympathetic nervous system (the "fight or flight" mode) and the parasympathetic nervous system (the "rest and digest" state). In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to get stuck in the sympathetic mode, where our bodies are always on high alert, leading to increased levels of cortisol and other stress hormones.

When we focus on regulating our nervous system and consciously activate the parasympathetic state, we help our bodies return to a place of calm and balance. This is crucial because while we can't always control what happens around us, we can control how we respond to life's challenges. Learning to regulate our stress response not only prevents cortisol spikes but also positively affects our physical health, emotional resilience, and overall sense of well-being.

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We've all heard about the health benefits of yoga and meditation, but in this ebook, I've focused on providing 11 different yet practical tools to help you shift from a state of stress to one of calm. These techniques are designed to engage your mind, body, and soul, creating a holistic approach to finding balance. Though simple, these tools are powerful practices that, when used consistently, can transform the way you navigate life's challenges. Let these techniques guide you in reclaiming your inner peace, no matter what's happening in the world around you.

Tool #1: Clearing Your Mind & Imagery

Step 1: Set aside 5-10 minutes of your time and find a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. Turn off any distractions, like your phone, by putting it on airplane mode.

Step 2: Sit comfortably, either in a chair with your feet flat on the ground or on the floor with your legs crossed. Close your eyes and take a deep breath.

Step 3: Visualize a peaceful place—somewhere you feel safe and calm. This could be a beach with gentle waves, a quiet forest, a serene mountain top, or any space that brings you joy. Focus on the details: the colors, sounds, and sensations of this place.

Step 4: As you focus on this image, place one hand on your belly. Begin deep breathing by inhaling for 4 seconds through your nose, feeling your belly inflate like a balloon. Then exhale for 4 seconds through your nose, feeling your belly deflate.

Step 5: Repeat the deep breathing cycle 10 times. If any other thoughts enter your mind, gently remind yourself that you will come back to them later and refocus on your peaceful image.

Step 6: On your last exhale, think of one thing you're grateful for. Gently open your eyes, stretch your body, and, as a bonus, look at yourself in the mirror and give yourself a positive compliment.

Tool #2: Dance & Shaking

Step 1: Find a private space where you can move freely. Put on your favorite upbeat song—something that makes you feel happy and energized.

Step 2: Start by standing with your feet hip-width apart. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to center yourself.

Step 3: Begin shaking out your hands, then move up to your arms, your shoulders, your legs, and finally your whole body. Let yourself shake as if you're shaking off water from your skin.

Step 4: Now, start dancing! Let your body move in any way that feels good to you. There's no right or wrong way—just move to the rhythm of the music and let your body lead.

Step 5: As you dance and shake, imagine all your stress and tension leaving your body. Visualize that energy being released into the ground.

Step 6: After a few minutes, slow down your movements, take a deep breath, and feel the difference in your body. You might notice a sense of lightness and relief.

Tool #3: Hold, Look, Listen, Smell

Step 1: Choose a grounding object—something small that you can hold in your hand. It could be a smooth stone, a piece of jewelry, or even a small vial of essential oil.

Step 2: Sit comfortably and hold the object in your hand. Focus on its texture: notice whether it feels rough, smooth, cool, or warm.

Step 3: Look closely at the object. Observe its color, shape, and any patterns or imperfections it might have.

Step 4: If your object has a scent, bring it close to your nose and take a deep breath, allowing the fragrance to fill your senses.

Step 5: As you hold, look, listen, and smell your grounding object, take slow, deep breaths to calm your mind and bring your awareness to the present moment.

Repeat this process anytime you feel overwhelmed or need to reconnect with your sense of calm.

Tool #4: Name Your Surroundings

Step 1: Find a comfortable place to sit or stand where you can observe your surroundings.

Step 2: Begin by naming all the colors you see around you. Say them out loud or in your mind: "I see blue, green, red, yellow..." Keep going until you've named every color you can spot.

Step 3: Once you've finished naming colors, pick a category that you enjoy, like animals, cities, or foods.

Step 4: Starting with the letter A, name one word for each letter of the alphabet in your chosen category. For example, if you chose cities: A for Amsterdam, B for Bangkok, C for Cairo.

Step 5: Continue this exercise until you either reach the end of the alphabet or until you feel your mind has shifted focus away from stressful thoughts.

This tool helps engage your brain in a playful way, pulling you into the present moment and reducing anxiety.

Tool #5: Mindful Breathing

Option 1: Double Inhale with Slow Exhale (For Moments of Anxiousness)

1. Sit or stand with your back straight. Place one hand on your belly and relax your jaw.
2. Take a quick inhale through your nose, then immediately take another, deeper inhale to fill your lungs completely.
3. Slowly exhale through your mouth, making the exhale longer than both inhales combined.
4. Repeat this pattern for 3-5 cycles, focusing on the sensation of your breath. This technique helps to activate the body's calming response, reducing feelings of anxiety.

Option 2: Inhale for 4 Seconds, Exhale for 8 Seconds (To Aid Sleep)

1. Lie down in a comfortable position or sit with your back supported. Place one hand on your belly.
2. Breathe in deeply through your nose for a count of 4 seconds, feeling your belly rise as you inhale.
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 8 seconds, feeling your belly deflate.
4. Repeat this breathing cycle several times, allowing your body to relax more with each breath. This longer exhale helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system, making it easier to fall asleep.

Tool #6: Affirmations & Mirror Work

Step 1: Choose a positive affirmation that resonates with you, such as "I am worthy of love and respect," or "I am strong and capable of handling whatever comes my way." Remember to keep it in the present tense and use positive language.

Step 2: Stand in front of a mirror and look directly into your own eyes. This might feel uncomfortable at first, but it's a powerful way to connect with yourself.

Step 3: Say your affirmation out loud while maintaining eye contact with yourself in the mirror. Speak with confidence and conviction, as if you truly believe every word.

Step 4: Repeat the affirmation several times, letting its message sink in deeper with each repetition. Pay attention to how your body responds as you say the words.

Pro Tip: Write your affirmations on post-it notes and place them around your house: on your bathroom mirror, fridge, or computer screen. Seeing these reminders throughout the day reinforces your positive mindset and keeps you motivated.

Tool #7: Listen to Music & Legs Up the Wall

Step 1: Find a quiet space where you can lie down comfortably on the floor.

Put on a calming playlist with soothing music that promotes relaxation; instrumental pieces, nature sounds, or anything that makes you feel at peace.

Step 2: Lie on your back and scoot your hips close to the wall. Lift your legs up so that they are resting vertically against the wall, forming an L-shape with your body.

Step 3: Close your eyes and focus on the music, letting the sounds wash over you. Let the melody guide your breath, breathing in sync with the rhythm.

Step 4: Stay in this position for 5-10 minutes. Elevating your legs in this way helps blood circulation, reduces swelling in your feet, and calms the nervous system.

Step 5: Allow the music to relax your mind while the gentle inversion of your legs helps relieve stress and tension from your body.

Tool #8: Root Grounding

Step 1: Stand tall with your feet firmly on the ground. Close your eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths to center yourself.

Step 2: Imagine that you are a tree with strong roots growing from the soles of your feet. Visualize these roots going deep into the ground, anchoring you.

Step 3: With each inhale, imagine the roots growing thicker and stronger, digging deeper into the earth. Feel the connection between your body and the ground.

Step 4: As you exhale, repeat affirmations like "I am grounded" or "I am safe and secure." Let these words flow with your breath.

Step 5: Continue this visualization for a few minutes, feeling more stable and supported with each breath.

Use this tool whenever you need to feel more grounded, especially during times of uncertainty or fear.

Tool #9: Progressive Body Relaxation

Step 1: Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Take a deep breath in, and as you do, tense the muscles in your right foot for 5 seconds, then exhale and completely relax them.

Step 2: Move to your left foot, repeating the process—tense for 5 seconds, then release.

Step 3: Continue up your body in this order:

- Right calf, then left calf
- Right thigh, then left thigh
- Hips and buttocks
- Stomach and chest
- Back muscles
- Right arm and hand, then left arm and hand
- Neck and shoulders
- Face muscles

Step 4: For each muscle group, tense as you inhale and fully relax as you exhale. Imagine the tension melting away with each breath.

Step 5: Once you have relaxed your entire body, take a few moments to enjoy the feeling of complete relaxation.

Use this tool to release physical tension from stress, helping you to feel more at ease.

Tool #10: Laugh Out Loud

Step 1: Find a quiet spot where you can relax without distractions.

Step 2: Think of a memory, a joke, or a funny moment that always makes you smile. Or, turn on your favorite comedy movie, stand-up routine, or funny YouTube clip.

Step 3: Allow yourself to laugh out loud, even if it feels forced at first. The act of laughing itself can release endorphins and lift your mood.

Step 4: If you don't feel like laughing, simply smile. Smiling alone can help trigger the same endorphin release.

Step 5: Repeat this process daily or whenever you need a mood boost. Remember, laughter truly is a form of medicine.

Surround yourself with people who make you laugh and create an environment that invites joy and light-hearted moments.

Tool #11: Cold Water Therapy

Step 1: When you're feeling overwhelmed, try using cold water to reset your body's stress response.

Step 2: Rub an ice cube on your wrists or the back of your neck. The cool sensation helps stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, bringing your body into a calmer state.

Step 3: If you have access, take a cold shower or splash cold water onto your face. Focus on the shock of the cold as it brings you into the present moment.

Step 4: Notice how the cold sensation shifts your focus away from your thoughts and brings clarity to your mind.

Step 5: Repeat this tool whenever you need a quick and effective way to calm your body and mind.

Cold water therapy can be a great way to refresh and reset, especially when you're feeling stressed or anxious.

Conclusion

Congratulations on completing this journey to learn powerful tools for regulating your nervous system! By integrating these practices into your daily life, you're taking a vital step towards achieving a more balanced and peaceful state of being. Remember, the most significant relationship you have is the one with yourself. Cultivating a healthy and loving relationship with yourself is the foundation upon which all other relationships are built. When you feel grounded, confident, and connected to your own needs and emotions, you can engage with the world around you in a healthier and more meaningful way.



Looking for more support?

As a mindset and relationship coach, I'm dedicated to helping both individuals and couples create stronger, more fulfilling relationships with themselves and others. Whether you're looking to deepen your self-awareness, enhance your communication skills, learn relational skills to build a more harmonious relationship with a partner, I'm here to guide you on that journey.

If you're interested in taking your growth to the next level, I offer a free consultation call to see if we're a good fit to work together. During this call, we'll explore your unique needs and how we can create a personalized plan to help you achieve your goals. Let's work together to build the life and relationships you truly desire, starting with the most important relationship of all: the one with yourself.

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