



Helpful Tips for Balancing your Nervous System

Balancing the nervous system is key to managing stress, improving mental clarity, and promoting overall well-being. Here are several natural and effective ways to achieve balance:

1. Breathwork & Deep Breathing

- Practicing diaphragmatic breathing (belly breathing) or specific techniques like 4-7-8 breathing helps stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation.

2. Meditation & Mindfulness

- Meditation calms the mind and body, reducing overactivity in the sympathetic nervous system (fight-or-flight response). Mindfulness can also train your brain to remain grounded and present.
- I also love guided meditations and hypnosis, specifically Michael Sealey on Youtube. He has a huge back catalogue of free meditations and hypnosis. Best to listen with headphones. Check him out [here](#).
- I've also recently discovered sound baths on Youtube. Again, great to listen through headphones. Deeply relaxing and helps your to "switch off". I'm loving [this guy](#).

3. Regular Exercise

- Physical activity boosts endorphins and serotonin levels, which help regulate mood and reduce anxiety. Activities like yoga, tai chi, and walking are particularly balancing for the nervous system.
- Remember though, that intense physical exercise increases cortisol (a stress hormone), this is a natural response but may not be beneficial for people who already have high cortisol (see below). Instead, opt for calming exercise, strength training and walking (esp in nature!)



- Symptoms of high cortisol include- weight gain (especially around the abdomen), weight loss resistance, fatigue, sleep issues (eg insomnia), digestive issues, hormonal imbalances, low libido, compromised immune system and slow healing.

4. Cold Exposure

- Cold showers or cold plunges can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing stress levels and promoting resilience in the nervous system over time.

HOWEVER this isn't for everyone. If you already have a heightened stress response or you find it very hard to get warm after cold exposure, then this isn't for you. Instead, just splash cold water over your face a few times, or the same on your feet. This can be sufficient to get the same benefits.

5. Adequate Sleep

- Sleep is crucial for nervous system repair and balance. Prioritising quality sleep helps maintain a balanced circadian rhythm, essential for regulating stress and energy levels.
- Aiming for 7-9hrs per night.
- No phone/ screens in your room, get morning sunlight (kickstarts your circadian rhythm), consider calming 'night' teas and specific sleep supplements, try to get to bed

6. Grounding (Earthing)

- Walking barefoot on natural surfaces like grass or sand can help reduce inflammation and calm the nervous system by connecting your body to the earth's natural electromagnetic frequencies.

7. Balanced Diet

- Eating whole foods rich in essential nutrients like magnesium, omega-3 fatty acids, and B vitamins supports brain health and nervous system function.
Reducing sugar and caffeine intake can also prevent overstimulation.



8. Adaptogenic Herbs

- Herbs like ashwagandha, rhodiola, and holy basil help the body adapt to stress by balancing cortisol levels and enhancing nervous system resilience.

9. Vagus Nerve Stimulation

- Stimulating the vagus nerve (which controls the parasympathetic system) through techniques like gargling, humming, or singing helps shift the body into a state of rest and digest.

This can be a game changer, so don't underestimate it's benefits. You can also buy vagal nerve toning devices, such as Sensate or Pulsetto. They aren't cheap though! A get around for this is to buy a regular TENS machine and adapt it to use as a vagal nerve stimulator. Lots of info about this online.

10. Time in Nature

- Spending time in nature can significantly reduce stress and restore nervous system balance by promoting relaxation and boosting mood-enhancing hormones. Try to do this several times a week.

11. Acupuncture or Acupressure

- These techniques target specific points on the body to relieve tension and encourage the flow of energy (Qi), which can help calm the nervous system and alleviate stress. A quick search online or in Youtube will bring up lots of info and videos on this.

12. Journaling or Creative Expression

- Writing down thoughts or engaging in creative outlets like drawing, music, or crafting helps release pent-up emotions and ease nervous system strain.



Nutritional aspects

1. Magnesium-Rich Foods

- Magnesium is vital for nervous system relaxation, reducing muscle tension, and promoting restful sleep. Foods like **leafy greens** (spinach, kale), **nuts** (almonds, cashews), **seeds**, **avocados**, and **legumes** help replenish magnesium levels and support nervous system health.

2. Omega-3 Fatty Acids

- Omega-3s are essential for brain function and reducing inflammation in the nervous system. Consuming **fatty fish** (salmon, mackerel, sardines), **chia seeds**, **flaxseeds**, and **walnuts** supports mood stability and protects the nervous system from oxidative stress.

3. B Vitamins

- B vitamins, particularly **B6**, **B9** (folate), and **B12**, play a key role in neurotransmitter function and energy production. They help maintain a healthy nervous system and reduce anxiety or stress. Include **whole grains**, **eggs**, **lean meats**, **dark leafy greens**, and **legumes** to boost B vitamin levels.

4. Tryptophan & Serotonin-Boosting Foods

- Tryptophan is an amino acid necessary for serotonin production, the “feel-good” neurotransmitter. Foods like **turkey**, **eggs**, **nuts**, **seeds**, and **bananas** help support serotonin levels and improve mood balance.

5. Antioxidants & Polyphenols

- Antioxidant-rich foods protect the nervous system from oxidative damage caused by stress. **Berries**, **dark chocolate**, **green tea**, and **colourful vegetables** are high in antioxidants like vitamin C, polyphenols, and flavonoids, which reduce inflammation and support nervous system resilience.



6. Probiotic-Rich Foods

- A healthy gut-brain connection is essential for nervous system balance. **Fermented foods** like **yogurt**, **sauerkraut**, **kimchi**, and **kefir** can boost gut health, which in turn supports neurotransmitter balance, especially serotonin and GABA (a calming neurotransmitter).

7. Healthy Fats

- The nervous system requires healthy fats for optimal function, particularly for the myelin sheath that protects nerve fibres. Include **coconut oil**, **olive oil**, **avocados**, and **nuts** for essential fatty acids that nourish and protect nerve cells.

8. Adaptogenic Herbs & Supplements

- Adaptogens such as **ashwagandha**, **rhodiola**, and **ginseng** help modulate the body's response to stress and support adrenal health, which directly impacts the nervous system. These can be used as part of a supplement regimen or through herbal teas.

9. Reduce Caffeine and Sugar

- Caffeine and sugar can overstimulate the nervous system, leading to anxiety and energy crashes. Opt for **herbal teas**, like **chamomile**, **lavender**, or **lemon balm**, which are calming alternatives that promote relaxation without overloading the system.

10. Hydration

- Proper hydration is crucial for nerve function and electrical signalling in the brain. Dehydration can exacerbate stress and impair cognitive function. Make sure to drink plenty of **water** throughout the day, and consider adding hydrating foods like **cucumbers**, **watermelon**, and **citrus fruits**.



11. GABA & L-Theanine

- **L-Theanine**, found in **green tea & matcha**, and **GABA**-promoting foods like **fermented foods** and **oats** help calm the nervous system by boosting the production of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a neurotransmitter that reduces nervous tension and promotes relaxation.

12. Reduce Alcohol and Processed Foods

- Alcohol and highly processed foods high in refined sugars and unhealthy fats can disrupt neurotransmitter balance and increase stress on the nervous system. Limiting or avoiding these can significantly improve nervous system function and overall mood stability.

From a nutritional therapy perspective, focusing on whole, nutrient-dense foods and limiting inflammatory triggers can significantly improve the health and balance of your nervous system.