Fundamentals of Regulating Your Nervous System

A 3-Week Course

WEEK 1 | Notice Your State

1 Map Your Nervous System

Circle where you are today. Notice your energy and body sensations.

ENERGY

10

HIGH ENERGY & ACTIVATION

Anxious • irritated • racing thoughts
Tight chest or jaw • urgency

Try a calming tool.

8

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

6

BALANCED ENERGY

Calm • clear • connected • present
Steady enough to respond and choose

Maintain what supports you.

5

4

LOW ENERGY & SHUTDOWN

Heavy • flat • foggy • withdrawn
Low motivation • difficulty starting

Try gentle activation.

2

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Mixed or unsure? Start by gently orienting to the room.

What do I notice in my body right now?



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WEEK 1 | Build Your Toolkit

2 Choose What Your System Needs

CALM HIGH ACTIVATION

1 Orient
Name 3 colours, 2 shapes, and 1 pleasant or neutral object.

2 Lengthen the exhale
Let 3-5 natural exhales become a little longer.

3 Use grounding pressure
Press feet down, palms together, or back into the chair. Release.

4 Add soothing sensory input
Try warmth, a comforting texture, or a steady sound.

5 Move slowly and rhythmically
Sway, rock, walk slowly, tap thighs, or roll shoulders.

GENTLY INCREASE ENERGY

1 Lift posture and gaze
Sit upright. Look toward the horizon or a brighter space.

2 Press and release
Press feet down for 5 seconds. Release. Repeat 3 times.

3 Add rhythmic movement
March, walk, swing arms, tap, or reach outward.

4 Use alerting sensation
Try fresh air, cool water, bright colour, or an energizing scent.

5 Use voice and connection
Hum, name today's date, count aloud, or contact a safe person.

3 My Starter Toolkit & Daily Practice

Calming tool: _____ Activating tool: _____

Backup tool: _____ When unsure, I will orient first.

Notice my state → **Choose** calming, activating, or maintaining → **Try** one tool for 30-90 seconds → **Recheck**: what changed, even by 1%?

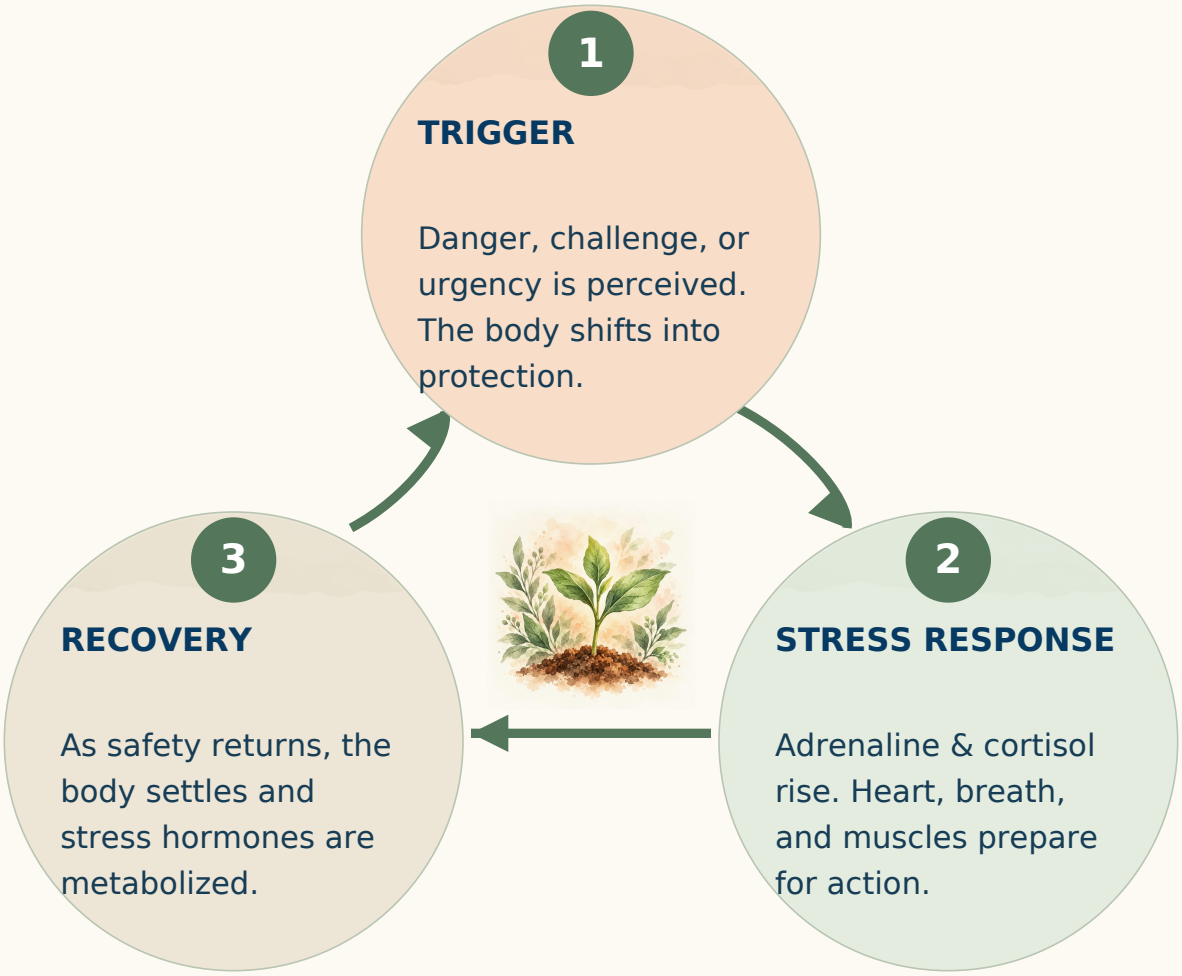
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WEEK 2 | Understand the Stress Response

1 The Stress Response Cycle

Notice where you are in the cycle - and where you can intervene.



TWO WAYS TO INTERRUPT THE CYCLE

1. Reduce the trigger

Step away or reduce exposure when possible.

2. Support recovery

Exhale, ground, stretch, or move gently.

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WEEK 2 | Practice & Apply

3 Two Pathways & How to Respond



THINKING

Frontal cortex

Notice: what-if thoughts, worry, replaying, or imagined problems.

Respond: “These are thoughts, not immediate danger. What are the facts? What is one next step?”



BODY ALARM

Amygdalae

Notice: sudden body alarm, dread, tension, or fast heartbeat.

Respond: “My alarm is on; I am safe right now.” Orient, exhale, ground, and soften.

Both together? “Body first, then brain.” Settle the body, then check the thoughts. Use safety statements when they fit your situation.

4 Exercise: Stop the Stress Response Cycle

Imagine: You rushed through the airport. You reached the gate with 20 minutes to spare - but your body is still in stress mode.

1 NOTICE
Heart, breath, jaw, shoulders, legs, thoughts.

2 SIGNAL SAFETY
Name 3 things you see. “I made it. I am safe now.”

3 SUPPORT RECOVERY
3-5 longer exhales; soften, ground, sip, stretch, or walk.

4 RECHECK
What changed, even by 1%?

My best tool: _____

Recent moment: which pathway? What safety message helps?

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WEEK 3 | Feel Regulation in Your Body

1 Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Explore the difference between tension and release. Notice what feels calmer, softer, or more at ease.

1. Notice & get comfortable

Sit or lie down, feet supported and hands relaxed. Bring attention to your body.

2. Breathe

Take a few slow, comfortable breaths.

3. Tense, then release

Gently tense each muscle group for 3-5 seconds. Let go; notice warmth, softness, or relaxation.

4. Move slowly through the body

Spend time noticing areas that carry tension. Avoid straining or pushing through discomfort.

5. Notice the shift

How do you feel at the end? What is different in your body and mind?



MUSCLE GROUPS | In order

Face & jaw → neck → shoulders → arms & hands → chest → stomach → hips & glutes → legs → feet

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WEEK 3 | Build the Daily Habit

2 Check In - Like a Phone Battery

Check your nervous system like a phone battery: notice early signals, then choose a supportive tool.

1. CHECK IN

Where is my nervous system now: high, balanced, or low?

2. PAIR IT

Link your check-in to something you do often, such as drinking water.

3. RE-REGULATE

Use a quick tool: breath, movement, posture, or grounding.

DAILY CHECK-IN PRACTICE

Time / cue	State: high, balanced, low	Body / mind: what I noticed	Tool I used to re-regulate

Reflect: When did I feel most / least regulated? Which tools helped? What might this change for my day, sleep, or well-being?

Use tools as experiments, not commands. Stop or modify anything that causes discomfort, dizziness, or greater distress.