



## Ways to Regulate the Nervous System

Simple practices to return to calm, connection, and safety.

### 1. Breath-Based Practices

- Box breathing: Inhale 4 – Hold 4 – Exhale 4 – Hold 4
- Extended exhale: Inhale 4 – Exhale 6 (activates the parasympathetic system)
- Coherent breathing: Breathe slowly at ~5-6 breaths per minute

### 2. Grounding Techniques

- 5-4-3-2-1 technique: Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste
- Touch something solid: Focus on temperature and texture
- Name your environment: “I am in my room. It’s Tuesday. The chair is blue.”

### 3. Gentle Movement

- Stretching or yoga
- Walking at a steady pace
- Rocking or swaying gently
- Progressive muscle relaxation

### 4. Soothing the Senses

- Warm drink or warm bath
- Soft blankets, weighted blankets
- Calming music or nature sounds
- Essential oils or pleasant smells



### **5. Vagal Nerve Activation**

- Humming or chanting
- Gargling or singing loudly
- Splashing the face with cold water

### **6. Connection & Co-Regulation**

- Talk to a trusted friend or therapist
- Hug or hold hands with someone safe
- Cuddle a pet or a soft toy
- Look into someone's eyes (if it feels safe)

### **7. Self-Compassion & Inner Support**

- Place a hand on your heart or face
- Speak to yourself kindly: "This is hard, and I'm doing my best."
- Write a short letter of support to yourself

### **8. Mindfulness & Focus**

- Focus on the breath or a single object
- Notice one small thing fully (e.g., the feeling of your feet on the floor)
- Do a simple, mindful activity (washing hands, sipping tea)