

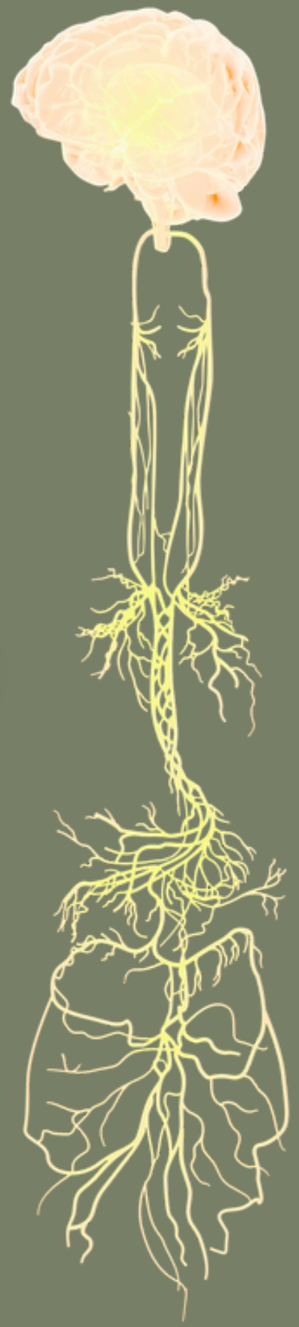
LOVE YOUR VAGUS

Restore's Simple Practices to improve your **Vagal Tone**

Harness the **Ruler** of your **Parasympathetic Nervous System** for Calm, Clarity and Confidence

www.therestoremethod.com

LOVE YOUR VAGUS



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Before you Start...

- **These practices stimulate your Parasympathetic Rest, Digest and Recovery circuit.** It is normal to feel calmer, and a release of emotion with your practices. However, if you feel any discomfort, overwhelm or exhaustion, take a break.
- **There is no need to rush things.** Especially if you are already exhausted, you may overstimulate your Vgus Nerve - and that can lead to chronic fatigue, dizziness, and, in severe cases, reduce your heart rate too much (bradycardia).
- **Pay attention to how your body feels during and after every practice.** Stop immediately if any practices make you feel nauseous, light-headed, or dizzy. If you experience this, lie down for a few minutes or sit and place your head between your knees, and avoid standing quickly.
- **If you have an exhausted, drained, Dorsal Vagal-dominant body,** focus on mobilising your body. For that, follow the + practices in the guide. If you are in **Functional Freeze,** please honour your body, and follow the **+-** suggestions on the next page.

Signs of nervous system decompression you may experience:

Spontaneous yawning,

Increased saliva,

Involuntary shaking or trembling,

Emotional release without a clear trigger,

Subtle shifts in physiological tension,

A welcome drop into stillness, clarity, awareness and calm.

Step 1: Determine your Baseline

Step 2: Choose your Practice(s) & Regulate

Some practices show this icon that will take you to external links.



To return to this guide from that link,
simply click on the back button.

Step 3: Check your Baseline again (5 is the goal)

Step 1: Determine your Baseline

ASK YOUR BODY: If **0** is feeling exhausted and drained and **10** is on edge and hyper-vigilant) where are you?
If you get a blended answer, ie Wired (8) but Tired (2), follow the **+-** suggestions on the next page.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

DORSAL VAGAL
DYSREGULATED
EXHAUSTED
DRAINED
FLAT, SAD

VENTRAL VAGAL
REGULATED
RELAXED
HAPPY, CALM
CONNECTED

SYMPATHETIC
DYSREGULATED
ON EDGE
ANXIOUS
HYPER, AGITATED







HYPO-AROUSED
0-4 = ADD ENERGY

ANCHOR HERE

HYPER-AROUSED
6-10 = REMOVE ENERGY

CHOOSE YOUR PRACTICE

Step 2: Choose your Practice

CALM | SAFE VENTRAL VAGAL

5

STRETCH/MASSAGE
Torso Stretches
SCM Massage
Ear Massage

BREATH
Soft Belly Breathing
Coherence Breathing
Physiological Sigh

VIBRATION
Belly Percussion
Hum/Chant/Sing/Gargle
The Voo

DEEPEN YOUR PRESENCE
Candle Practice
Question the Story
Power of a Smile

FLIGHT/FIGHT SYMPATHETIC

6-10

STRETCH/MASSAGE
Neck and Eye Stretch
Seated twist
Simple Torso Stretch
SCM Massage
Ear Massage
Silent Scream

BREATH
Soft Belly Breathing
Ocean Breath
Rectangle 1:2 Breath
Coherence Breathing
Physiological Sigh

VIBRATION
Ocean Breath
Hum/Chant/Sing/Gargle
The Voo
TRE/Shake it off

PRESENCE
90 seconds practice
The Four Thumps EFT
Candle Practice
Contact Point Practice
Question the Story

SHUTDOWN DORSAL VAGAL

0-4

STRETCH/MASSAGE
Silent Scream
Seated twist
Simple Torso Stretch

BREATH
Soft Belly Breathing
Physiological Sigh
Bee Breath
Fire Breath

VIBRATION
Belly Percussion
Ocean Breath
Hum/Chant/Sing/Gargle
The Voo
TRE/Shake it off

PRESENCE
90 seconds practice
Contact Point Practice
The Four Thumps EFT
Question the Story
Power of a Smile

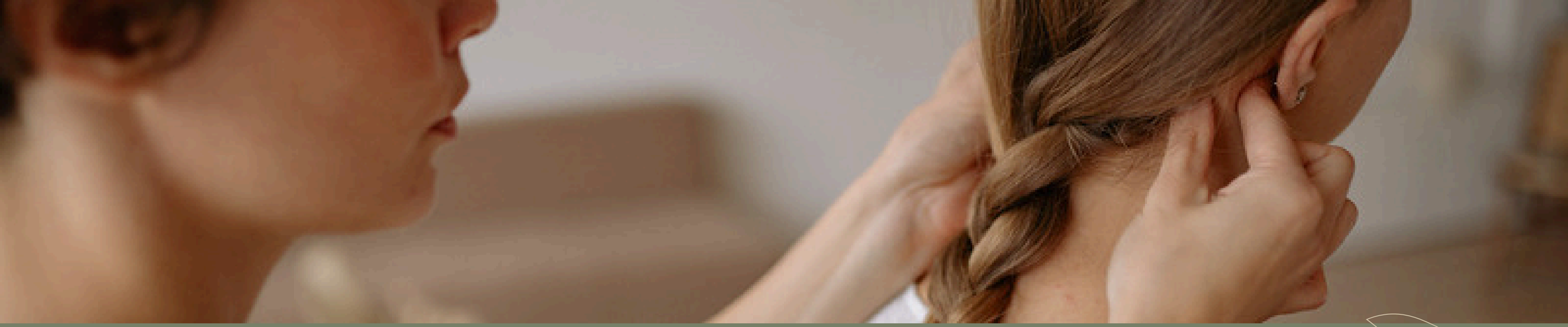
COLD EXPOSURE

FROZEN STUNNED WIRED & TIRED

The Four Thumps EFT
TRE/Shake
The Voo
Hum/Chant/Sing/Gargle
Silent Scream

7-minute practice for Functional Freeze Youtube link:

What is Shutdown & Functional Freeze?



Stretch/Massage

A compressed Vagus Nerve can lead to dysfunction in the heart, lungs and digestive tract, and may lead to heart palpitations, dizziness and breathing difficulties.

These interoceptive (inner) sensations can create panic and anxiety, and/or make your panic and anxiety worse.

Stretching the torso and massaging the neck and ears can be simple ways to access some areas that open up space for your Vagus Nerve to flow more freely.

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Neck & Eye stretch

- Get a baseline of how tight your neck is. Look left and right, and notice which side feels tighter?
- **1.** Place your right hand over the left ear. Gently tilt your head with your hand towards your right shoulder.
- Look to the left, or up to the sky/ceiling while keeping your head facing forward. D**o this until you yawn, swallow or sigh.** This indicates your Vagus Nerve and parasympathetic state has been activated.
- **2.** Repeat on the other side. Check your neck and feel the difference! One round is usually enough.

1 2



WHY IT WORKS: The Vagus Nerve actively controls your pupil dilation, tear production, and even the tiny muscles that focus your eyes. Eye movements can also increase blood flow to the vertebral artery and stimulate the Vagus Nerve as it passes through the upper neck.

Seated twist with deep breath

- Come into a twist by placing your left hand on the outside of your right leg while placing your right hand behind you or in the center of your chair.
- On an inhalation, lengthen your spine, and on your exhalation, deepen the twist of your spine toward the right.
- You can also bring your chin to the right and gaze over your shoulder.
- Take several breaths here to massage your digestive organs, and then return to the center.
- When you are ready, switch sides and repeat to the left.
- Once you are complete, return to the center and notice how you feel mentally, physically, and emotionally.



WHY IT WORKS:

You make space for your Vagus and gently flush lymph fluid throughout your body.

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Simple Torso Stretch

1



- **1.**Sit cross-legged. Reach your right arm overhead and gently pull it to the left with your left hand. Keep your hips grounded. Hold for 5–10 deep diaphragmatic breaths, then switch sides. Repeat 6-10 rounds.

2



- **2.**Start on all fours or stand with hands on thighs.
  Inhale: arch your back (cow pose), lifting your head and tailbone.
  Exhale: round your spine (cat pose), tucking chin and pelvis.
  Repeat slowly for 6–10 rounds.

- **3.**Rest in Child Pose. This pose encourages diaphragmatic breathing as the belly presses against the thighs.

3



WHY IT WORKS: Widening the ribcage and sides of the body makes it easier to access and stimulate the Vagus Nerve branches in the neck and chest, improving your entire nerve pathway and general vagal tone.

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Massage SCM

Set an alarm for 2-3 minutes

- One of the best ways to access your Your Vagus Nerve is from the ear down your neck on both sides.
- Gentle stretching of the SCM and scalenes in the neck also tends to produce a relaxation response through the engagement of the vagus nerve.
- Repeat on the other side.

WHY IT WORKS: Vagus Nerve runs right behind the sternocleidomastoid muscles (SCM) and in front of the scalenes, which tend to be the tightest muscles in the neck.



Ear Massage

1.STIMULATE CYMBA CONCHA

Place your fingertip right inside the cymba concha. Move the skin backward in slow, small circles. There shouldn't be any pain or discomfort, although it may feel a little different side to side. Sometimes this will trigger a regulating sigh, swallow, or yawn.

2.STIMULATE CAVUM CONCHA

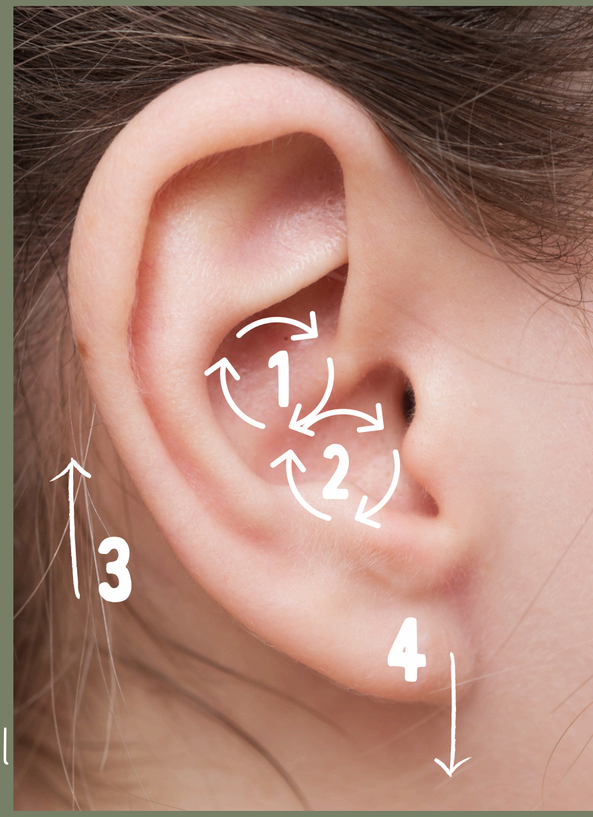
Move to the cavum concha and gently move the skin in the cavum backward toward the back of your head, and perform slow, gentle circles.

3.STIMULATE SKIN BEHIND THE EAR

Place your finger or fingers on the skin behind your ear. Gently pull the skin up towards your crown, moving the skin over the tissue. This is a myofascial release. Hold until you feel a release. This could feel like your finger can move easier and the skin feels more elastic.

4.PULL EAR LOBES

Gently pull down on the ear lobe. This is also a craniosacral technique, so it can have benefits for dizziness, headaches, and other neurological symptoms. **Now switch sides and repeat 1-4.**



WHY IT WORKS:

A small vagal branch (auricular) innervates part of the outer ear, so you can directly stimulate the Vagus Nerve here.

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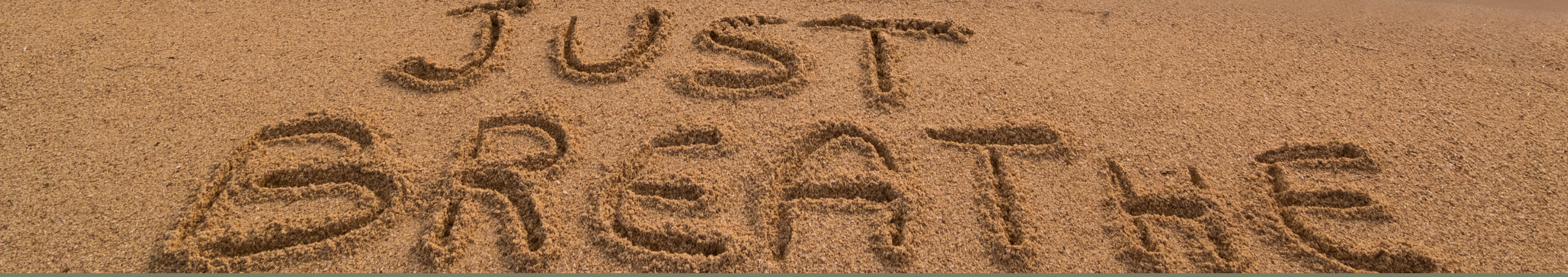
Silent Scream

- Take a deep breath in, and open your mouth as if you're about to let out a huge scream.
- Close windpipe, scream quietly and intensely without making a sound.
- You're forcing out the scream.
- When you inhale, fill up the belly, not the chest.
- Slowly push air out until the last drop of air is out.
- Repeat several times or until you feel less tension in your body.

WHY IT WORKS: This posture decompresses the deep front fascial line, the TMJ that is often clenched under tension and the occiput (where the skull meets the spine), It allows allows stored tension to move through the body without needing words.



Conscious Breathing

Slow, deep breathing, especially with long exhales, activates the parasympathetic nervous system through the Vagus Nerve.

Deep breathing moves the diaphragm, which is directly connected to the Vagus Nerve.

Conscious breathing enhances interoception, which improves brain-body communication via vagal afferent signals.

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“Soft” + “Belly” Breathing



- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Take a few long breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth with a soft sigh - never forcing, just letting the exhale drop.

- As you inhale, feel your breath move down into your belly; as you exhale, let your belly relax effortlessly.

- Focus on softening your belly. As you breathe in, feel your hand rise and think the word “soft.” As you breathe out, feel your belly drop and let go of any tension, thinking the word “belly.”

- With each inhale, imagine your belly being gently nourished by the breath. With each exhale, allow the breath to release tension, making space for thoughts, emotions, and sensations to rise and fall. Soften your jaw, your shoulders, and your neck as you rest in this calm, spacious breath.

WHY IT WORKS: Accessing abdominal muscles and organs helps release the inner body, so your Vagus Nerve can communicate better with your stomach and digestive tract, which supports your sense of calm and improves digestion, as well. Touch can restore a felt sense of safety to the body, allowing an exhausted body to let go of its chronic need to protect itself.

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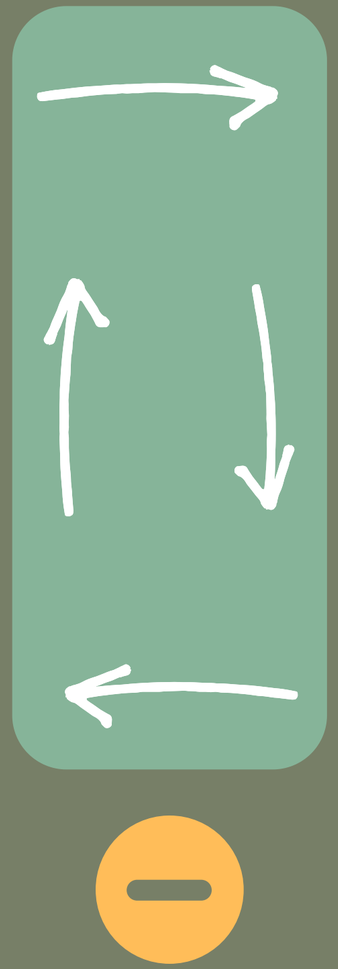
Rectangle Breath (1:2)

- **Inhale** (nose) – 3 counts
- **Exhale** (mouth) – 6 counts
- **Inhale** (nose) – 3 counts
- **Exhale** (mouth) – 6 counts

Repeat for 8-10 rounds and work up to 3-5 minutes a day.



WHY IT WORKS: During exhalation, the diaphragm snuggles up to the heart and reduces the stroke volume. The baroceptors inside the heart communicate these pressure changes via the Vagus Nerve to the brain as to decrease the heartbeat.

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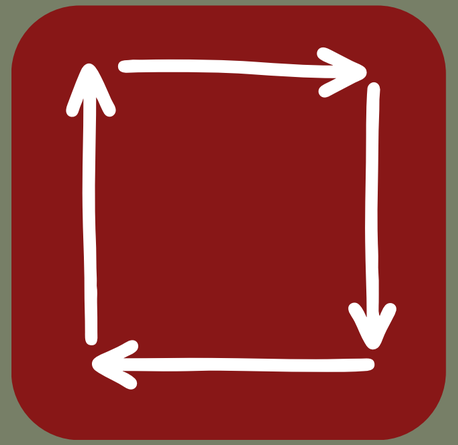
Box Breathing

- **Inhale** (nose) – 4 seconds
- **Hold** – 4 seconds
- **Exhale** (mouth) – 4 seconds
- **Hold** – 4 seconds



Repeat for 8-10 rounds and work up to 3-5 minutes a day.

WHY IT WORKS: Brief breath holds improve your body's tolerance to carbon dioxide (CO_2), which helps reduce panic and improve oxygen efficiency - a vagal-supportive adaptation.

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Heart Coherence Breathing

- Breathe at a steady rhythm of 5 to 6 breaths per minute (inhale 5 seconds, exhale 5 seconds).
- Stay focused on the breath without forcing it.
- Inhale for 5 seconds (nose)
- Exhale for 5 seconds (mouth)
- Repeat as many rounds as is comfortable and work your way up to 5-10 minutes a day. Try to maintain 5 breaths per minute.

WHY IT WORKS: This breath creates coherence between heart rate and breathing, which boosts Heart Rate Variability and Vagal Activity. This rhythm supports optimal Vagus Nerve activation.

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Physiological Sigh

- It's a double inhale followed by a long exhale:
- Two or three quick inhales through the nose or mouth (the second inhale is deeper than the first)
- A slow, long exhale through the mouth.
- Repeat several times until you feel calmer

WHY IT WORKS: This breathing pattern helps "top off" your lungs with extra oxygen and then removes more carbon dioxide, which helps reset your autonomic nervous system and activate the parasympathetic response. The double inhale expands the lungs fully, opening collapsed air sacs (alveoli). Can slightly raises alertness, helping a frozen system begin to mobilise. Engages conscious breath without being overwhelming or high-effort.

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Bee Breath

- Sit Comfortably: In a quiet space, spine straight, eyes closed.
- **Inhale** long and deep through the nose.
- **Exhale** while buzzing: Gently close the lips and make a soft **"mmmmm" or "bzzzzzz"**. You can add a shoulder roll on each breath cycle.
- **Optional**: Lightly press fingers over your eyes, ears, or temples to block external stimuli and go deeper inward.
- Repeat: 5–10 rounds (or for 3–5 minutes).

WHY IT WORKS: Vibrations calm the amygdala, the brain's fear centre. Humming stimulates the vagus nerve, increasing relaxatio by slowing the heart rate and lowering blood pressure. To further energise your body, focus on longer inhales, shorter exhales to gently energise.

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Fire Breath

- Sit comfortably with a straight spine.
- Inhale gently through the nose.
- Forcefully exhale through the nose by quickly contracting the lower belly.
- Let the inhale happen naturally without effort.
- Repeat in quick succession (eg, 1 breath per second). Start with doing 30 seconds and work up to a minute.

WHY IT WORKS: This breathing pattern activates the sympathetic nervous system to increase your energy, supporting the body to rebound into Ventral Vagal calm. **Avoid** if you have high blood pressure/pregnant.



Vibration

The Vagus Nerve is connected to the vocal cords, the muscles at the back of your throat and passes through your inner ear.

90–95% of serotonin is produced in the gut, not the brain, The Vagus Nerve is a key communication highway in the gut-brain axis.

The Vagus detects serotonin levels and relays that information to the brainstem to understand the state of the gut, mood and inflammation.

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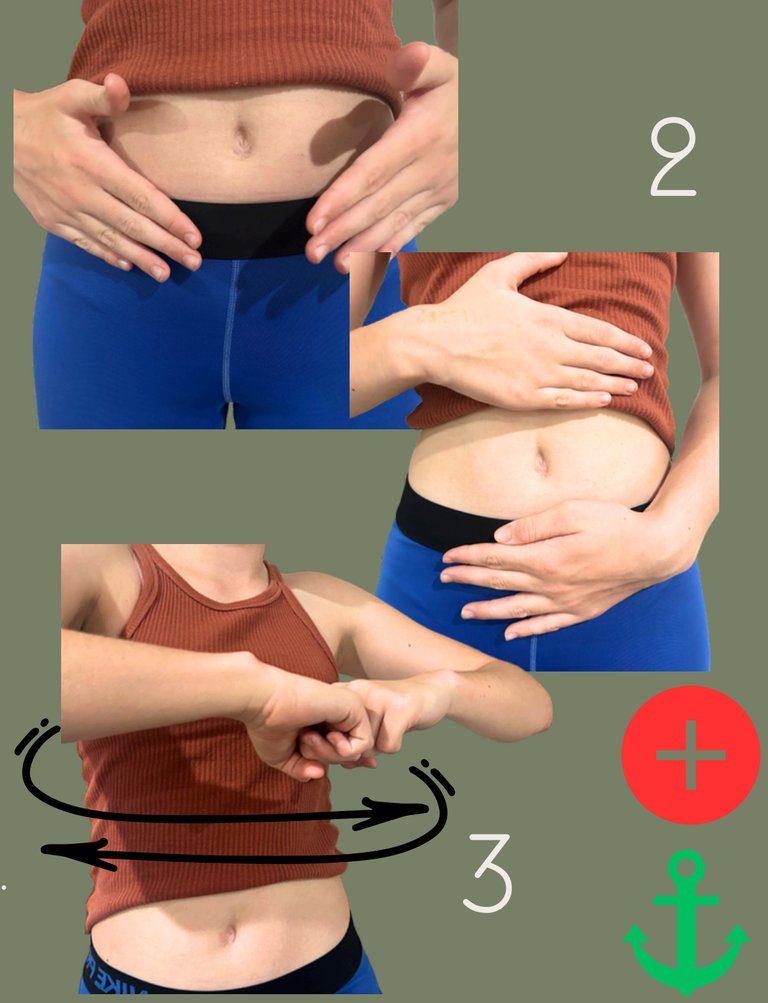
Belly Percussion

- Sit, feet parallel, making sure your feet are flat on the floor. Tuck chin in and close your eyes if you want to relax more. Focus on making your body soft and relaxed. Take some deep belly breaths.
- 1: Use both flat hands, alternate taps below the BELLY BUTTON x 25 times. Using both hands, tap abdomen on lower belly below the belly button.
- 2: With flat hands, alternate taps ABOVE AND BELOW BELLY button x 25 times Split hands and tap above and below your belly button.
- 3: Make fists with your hands and hold your fists together.
  Gently start to twist your waist to slowly open the mid section of your torso.
  Gently twist side to side with the fists held together as you twist.
  Twist slowly side to side, fists going side to side.
- Rest your hands on your knees. Close your eyes.
  Feel any sensations, warmer, tingling, hands, feet, legs.
  Do you feel calmer? Detect more saliva in your mouth? That's rest and digest. Notice any changes compared to when you first started.



WHY IT WORKS: A healthy Dorsal Vagal branch helps to balance your digestion. It's called the gut-brain axis. When we gently stimulate the abdomen you can help tone it up.

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Ocean Breath

- Cough slightly to find the muscles in your throat you'll utilise for the breath.
- Slightly constricting your windpipe like that, you will breathe in and out to make the sound of the ocean, a hissing/whisper sound or the sound of a little child snoring.
- **Begin by breathing slowly and deeply through your nose.** Slightly constrict the back of your throat (like fogging a mirror with your breath, but with your mouth closed).
- **Exhale through your nose:**
  Maintain the same throat constriction on the exhale.
  The breath should be audible to you, but not loud or forced.
- **Breath rhythm:**
  - Inhale for a count of 4-6 seconds.
  - Exhale for a count of 6-8 seconds (aim for slightly longer exhales over time).
  - Continue for 3-10 minutes, gradually lengthening and smoothing the breath.

WHY IT WORKS: Slight constriction at the back of the throat engages the glottis, creating gentle internal vibrations. These vibrations stimulate the Vagus Nerve promoting parasympathetic activation.

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The VOO

LOW VOO, VIBRATE BELOW DIAPHRAGM

HIGH VOO WITH A SNARL VIBRATE ABOVE DIAPHRAGM

- Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your lungs fully and gently.
- Exhale Slowly with the Sound “Voooooo...”
- As you exhale, vocalise the sound “VOO” (like "vuuuuu"), letting it resonate deep in your chest.
- Allow the sound to be long and low, like a foghorn or didgeridoo. Feel the vibration in your chest, throat, and belly - this is key.
- After the exhale, allow a brief natural pause.
- Notice sensations in your body - any shifts, releases, warmth, tingling, or calm.
- Repeat. Do 3 to 5 rounds, or more if desired. Keep your attention on both the sound and your internal experience.

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Chant, Hum, Sing, Gargle

- Inhale deeply, then chant "**OM**" slowly. "Oooooo" (resonates in the chest and mouth) ... "Mmmmm" (vibrates the nasal cavity and skull). Let the full sound last through the exhale. Repeat for 3–5 minutes.

- Close your lips gently and take a slow, deep inhale (nose). On the exhale, hum softly, feeling the vibration in your chest, throat, or nose. Repeat for 3–5 minutes. Tip: Focus on the sensation of vibration. The nasal and chest resonance boosts vagal stimulation.



- Sing any song that brings you joy - especially ones with long sustained notes or deep resonance (mantras, lullabies, sacred music). Group singing can be especially powerful, enhancing social bonding, which further supports vagal tone.

- Gargle. Vigorous gargling with water engages vagal pathways.

WHY IT WORKS: Vibrations stimulate the Vagus through mechanical and auditory pathways, especially via areas it physically connects to, like the larynx (voice box), pharynx (throat), ears, and diaphragm. Chanting has been shown to deactivate the limbic system, supporting emotional regulation.

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Shake it Off (TRE)

- Lie on your back with legs resting up a wall or on a chair. Begin to lightly vibrate, rock or shake your legs. Start subtle and let it build naturally.
- Keep your jaw, breath, and face relaxed.
- Then begin to gently shake your legs for 1–2 minutes or until you feel a sense of release or calm.
- Rest afterward for a minute or two to let your body integrate the shift.

WHY IT WORKS: Tremor Releasing Exercises can discharges muscular tension in a safe way, encouraging vagal nerve activity and the parasympathetic state. Helpful practice for the Freeze state, to support the gentle release of trapped sympathetic energy. Great to do before bed of if you wake in the early hours.

Presence



- Returning to the present moment helps calm the nervous system by signaling safety, reducing stress responses, and allowing the body to shift out of fight-or-flight and into a state of rest and regulation.

- Conscious grounding helps the Vagus Nerve by activating the ventral vagal pathway, which signals safety to the brain and body.
This reduces heart rate, deepens breathing, and shifts the nervous system into a calm, regulated state. It strengthens the vagal tone, improving your ability to recover from stress.

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90 Seconds Practice

- Set a timer for **90 seconds** or click on the link for one.
- Locate the Emotion you are struggling with.
- Just let the Emotion be there. Simply observe it, no need to change it.
- Just for now, allow for the Emotion. Be with the Emotion.
- It might feel strong for a moment, and then subside.
- Let the Emotion complete itself.
- Wait until the time is up. By then, you will probably feel the Emotion has subsided. Now, change the scenery - ie, have a shower or go for a walk.



WHY IT WORKS: It interrupts reactivity by creating space between the trigger and your response by engaging the the prefrontal cortex (thinking brain) rather than letting the limbic system (emotional brain) take over.

Candle Practice for Mental Clarity

- Light a candle and sit comfortably in front of it.
- Let the flame be at eye level, about an arm's length away.
- Soften your gaze and gently focus on the flame.
- Let your breath slow down - inhale through the nose, exhale through the mouth. Breathe slowly and deeply.
- Feel the rise and fall of each breath as you watch the flicker of the flame.
- When your mind wanders, gently return your attention to the candle. No judgment - just come back to the flame. Continue for 1–3 minutes.
- Remember to blow out your candle when done.



WHY IT WORKS: Anchors your attention in the present moment, slows your breathing, calming the nervous system and activating the Vagus Nerve. Clears mental clutter and improves focus.

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Contact Point Practice

- Lie down comfortably. You might like to stretch out. If you are 6-10 you will **soften** your body where it is making contact. If you are 0-4 you will **push into** the areas making contact.
- Start with your head - soften or push back into the floor, or wall, or soften.
- Move your way down your body - everywhere your body parts make contact, you are either going to push into the floor (0-4) or make it as soft as you possibly can (6-10).
- Continue this way down, remembering your hands and fingers, as well.
- When you reach your heels or your flat feet on the ground, you should begin to notice your baseline number returning to the middle.
- Repeat the practice all the way back to your head and enjoy the result!
- Take some deep breaths and get up slowly.



WHY IT WORKS: Contact stimulates internal awareness (interoception) and body position sense (proprioception). These touch and pressure sensations engages the Vagus Nerve. This practice can anchor you in the present moment, pulling you out of mental spirals or freeze.

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Question the Story in your Head

Your thoughts and stories about who you are, what other people are like and what the world is, start in your Autonomic Nervous System. In times of upset, information travels from the Vagus Nerve and your hormonal system to the brain. The mind then tries to make sense of this situation... and a story follows.



- With this upset, what am I saying to myself, about myself, others and the world?
- **I am** .... **Others are** ... **The World is** ...
- Can I say, with **100% certainty** that each one is **100% True?**
- Who am I with this story?
- Who would I be, if I didn't have this story?
- What is **true-er?** I am ... Others are ... The World is ...
- Shake it off

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The Four Thumps



- **1**.Tap your Cheekbones lightly on both sides and up to the temples, in line with, the pupil. (Stimulates stomach meridian to calm from anxiety).
- **2.** Rub or tap the Collarbones (Stimulates kidney meridian to calm fear, and adrenals).
- **3.** Thump or tap on the soft spot in the middle of the sternum. (Stimulates thymus gland for a boost of energy and to support immune system).
- **4.** Rub in small circles and/or tap vigorously on both sides under the arms where the protruding rib sticks out.
(Spleen meridian - calms worry, anxiety).

WHY IT WORKS: This EFT tapping technique can reawaken the body after shock, relieves numb or frozen energy and turns energy circuits back on and increases energy in mind and body.

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The Power of a Smile

- Sit or lie down. Let your shoulders soften. Take a slow, deep breath.
- Gently smile. Not a forced grin - just a light, natural smile. Feel it in your cheeks, maybe in your eyes.
- Breathe into your smile. Inhale gently through your nose. Exhale slowly through your mouth.
- Notice how the smile subtly shifts your energy - you are becoming softer, lighter.
- Imagine your smile spreading - To your heart. Watch your heart as it smiles.
  What can be more beautiful than a smiling heart?
- Next, imagine your smiling heart gently inward, to all of your other organs. Each one is now smiling.
  What can be more beautiful than a smiling liver!
- Repeat this smiling practice until all of your organs are smiling... and see how it improves your day!



WHY IT WORKS: A genuine smile (especially one that engages the eyes (called a Duchenne smile) helps stimulate the Vagus Nerve, calming the nervous system and supporting emotional regulation.

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Gentle Cold Exposure

Cold exposure techniques can be helpful as the sudden immersion in cold water will **activate** the sympathetic nervous system, giving a Dorsal Vagal Dominant body a welcome boost of energy.

Cold exposure can also trigger release of important feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters, such as dopamine, serotonin, cortisol, norepinephrine, and β-endorphins.

Please Note: If you are sympathetically hyper-aroused (Flight/Fight), have diabetes, high blood pressure and/or heart issues, **avoid** cold exposure and/or ice plunges.

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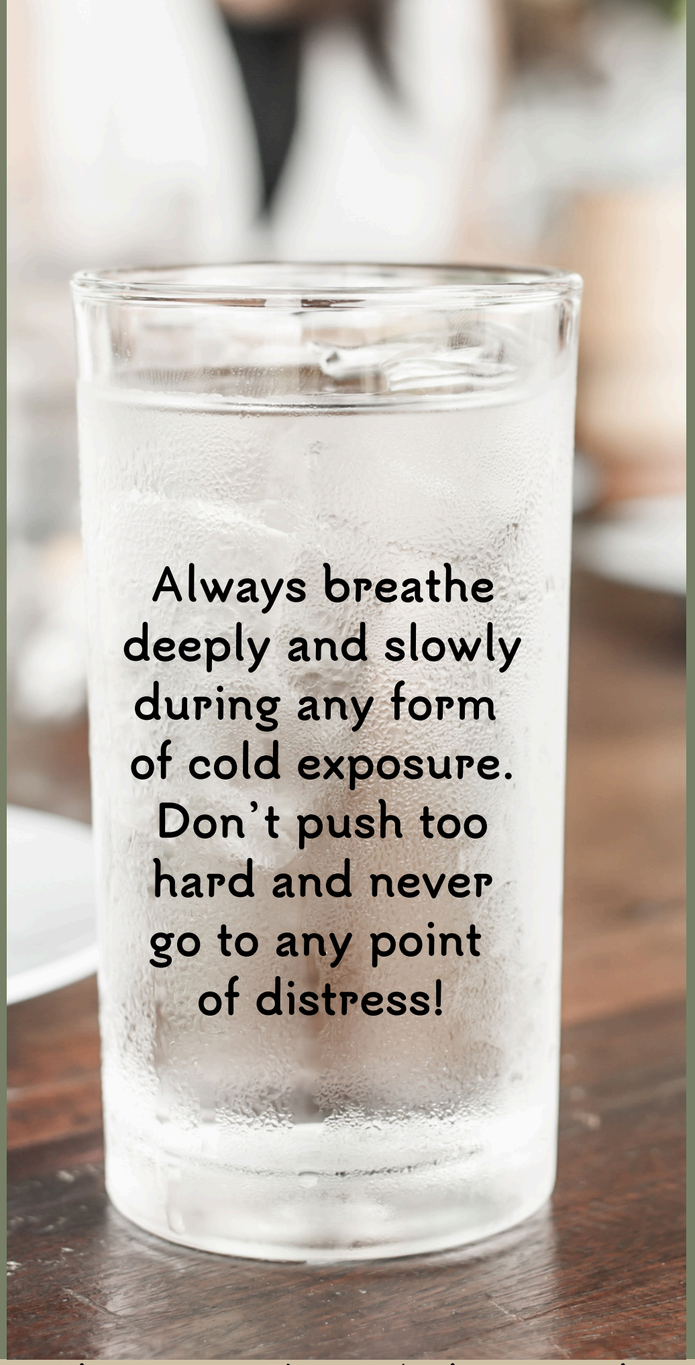


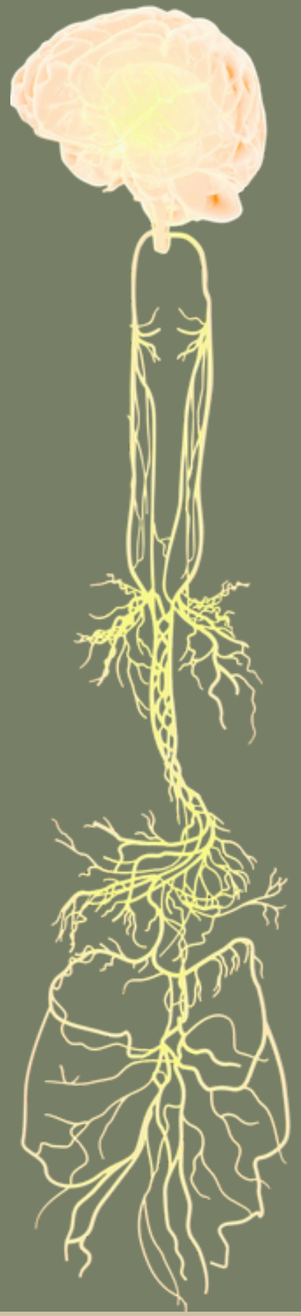
Simple Cold Exposure Practices to **boost energy**

- Fill a bowl with cold water. Take a deep breath and plunge your face for 15-30 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times as needed.
- Chew on ice.
- Place a cold pack or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a cloth on your upper chest or the back of your neck for 1–2 minutes. Sit or lie down calmly while doing this.
- At the end of a warm shower, turn the water to cold for 15–60 seconds. Focus the stream on your neck, upper back, and face. Breathe slowly and deeply through the discomfort.
- Sip cold water slowly and gargle for 10–30 seconds. Repeat 2–3 times.

Please note: This guide **does not advise** cold exposure or plunges for a body in sympathetic hyper-arousal. Use Gentle Cold Exposure as a way to 'wake up' your exhausted and drained system as it activates your sympathetic response, adding energy. **This is not medical advice.**

Vagus Nerve - The Wanderer

- The Vagus Nerve starts at the brainstem and splits into two main circuits.
- It runs through the ears, neck, throat, chest, heart, lungs, and digestive system.
- The Dorsal Vagal Circuit supports digestion when balanced. When out of balance, it can cause digestive issues and chronic problems.
- The Ventral Vagal Circuit helps regulate your heart rate using the Vagal Brake. This slows your heart when you're calm and allows it to speed up when needed.
- A strong Vagal Brake means better stress recovery, emotional balance, and flexibility. A weak Vagal Brake can cause overreactions, a fast resting heart rate, and poor stress tolerance.
- Vagal Tone measures how well your Vagus Nerve works. Higher tone = faster recovery from stress.
- **Important:** If you're feeling exhausted or shutdown (Dorsal Vagal Overdrive), increase energy through sympathetic activation. Focus on vibration exercises, cold exposure, movement, and play to boost your energy.



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Possible symptoms of low **Vagal Tone:**

The following symptoms may indicate low Vagal Tone.

- Headaches, ear and jaw pain
- Brain fog, imbalance, vertigo
- Trouble speaking and swallowing
- Gut inflammation and/or chronic gut issues
- Sensitivity to Stress, Panic and anxiety
- Poor emotional and attentional regulation
- Reduced or loss of gag reflex, loss of voice and difficulty swallowing
- Depression or bouts of depression, anxiety, PTSD and CPTSD
- Metabolic disorders such as Type 2 diabetes
- Cardiovascular issues or concerns

Please note: This guide is not a diagnostic tool. Please seek appropriate functional medical advice if you're concerned about the health of your Vagus Nerve.

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL FREEZE?

- **Your Sympathetic Nervous System and Dorsal Vagal Circuit are both online.** You're mentally checked out but still performing; your nervous system is in overdrive, leaving you anxious, overstimulated, and drained all at once.
- Wired on the inside but Tired on the outside
- Emotionally flat and withdrawn but have the energy to do what needs doing

WHAT IS SHUTDOWN/COLLAPSE?

Your Parasympathetic Nervous System (Dorsal Vagal Nerve) is Dominant. You may have have low exhaustion, numbness, dissociation, emotional flatness or hopelessness, withdrawal.
The body is in "power save mode" - not in fight or flight, but in collapse.

If this sounds like you, your body may benefit from therapeutic support by a qualified practitioner.

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The **Vagus Nerve** may also benefit from:

- Massage therapy and bodywork, yoga and pilates
- Taking probiotics and magnesium supplements
- Joining a social group, sporting team, choir or drumming circle
- Consciously increasing internal sense of safety by spending time with loved ones, in nature and doing things that bring a a sense of calm, clarity and confidence
- Controlled/Supervised cold plunges with an experienced nervous system-informed bodyworker
- Controlled/Supervised restorative breathwork sessions with an experienced nervous system-informed and trained breathwork practitioner
- Polyvagal Nervous System and/or Trauma-informed Therapy

Please note: While this guide's immediate strategies are invaluable for coping in the moment, they do not replace the need for comprehensive therapeutic work that tackles the core issues driving these nervous system states. Any program designed to support your nervous system needs to incorporate this deeper level of healing. Depth work, including therapy that focuses on trauma, understanding attachment styles, and exploring triggers - can provide a more lasting and profound healing process. By integrating both immediate regulation strategies and depth work, individuals can achieve true healing and resilience, rather than just managing symptoms. It's important to approach nervous system regulation holistically, ensuring that we don't bypass the deeper work necessary for long-term well-being.
By addressing both the symptoms and the underlying causes, we can create a more balanced and effective path to recovery.

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DISCLAIMER:
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