

Module 3 – Nervous System Balancing

[6 videos, 5 assignments]

The autonomic nervous system has two primary states of function that guide the function of nearly all systems in the body. In order to optimize function and healing, it is critical that you match your activity with the proper nervous system state. Healing is almost exclusively occurring in the parasympathetic state...the “rest and digest” state. Thus, it is imperative that we increase parasympathetic tone and use practices that will engage the natural healing state.

Video 3.1 — Nervous System introduction

Video 3.2 — Autonomic Pairing

Video 3.3 — Hot & Cold Therapy

Video 3.4 — Homework 12

Homework

Estimated days to implement: 7 days

It is estimated that this assignment will take you 7 days to implement. However, you should move forward at your own pace. It is important that you sufficiently implement this assignment before moving on to the next module.

Assignment

Your objective is to eat and exercise in the proper nervous system state. This involves giving the body time between meals and exercise as well as exercising at the proper times of day. Doing most of our heavy moving between 8 am – 4 pm appears to be ideal.

- Parasympathetic Eating Practices
 - Don't eat during or right after exercise. Give your body an hour to calm down.
 - Prepare, cook, and smell your food before eating.
 - Step away from computers and other distractions.
 - Eat outside or with friends and family.
 - Take a moment to pray or consciously take a few deep breaths before eating.
 - Meditate for 15+ minutes prior to eating.
- Sympathetic Exercise Recommendations
 - Exercise in the morning, midday, or early afternoon if possible.
 - No exercise within 1 hour of eating a meal.
 - Short intense exercise with periods of rest is most beneficial. This is known as burst training, interval training, Tabata training, or high intensity interval training (HIIT).
- BONUS: Improve Vagus Nerve Tone
 - Step 1: If you suffer from poor motility and digestive flow, you may have poor vagus nerve function.
 - Test your gag reflex with a tongue depressor. If you have poor gag reflex, you may have poor vagal tone.
 - Listen to your gut with stethoscope or have a loved one put their ear up against your belly. There should be noticeable gurgling sounds within 3 hours after a meal.
 - Another way to test your vagal tone is to stand in front of a mirror, open your mouth and say "ahhhhh". You should expect to see your uvula (looks like a punching bag) remain in the center and each arch on the sides of the uvula should both rise up. If there is a failure of both palate arches to rise, you may have poor vagal tone and want to get examined by your doctor to verify your findings.

- [How to test the vagus by inspecting the palate & uvula](#)
- Step 2: To improve vagal tone, you can use the following techniques.
 - Singing loudly multiple times a day
 - Gargle aggressively with water as hard and as long as possible 3 times a day. This should be aggressive enough to nearly bring tears.
 - Vagus nerve breathing multiple times a day, especially before and after eating.
 - [How to do vagus nerve breathing](#)

Assignment

Incorporate either cold therapy or heat therapy (or both) at least once a day. The heat provides benefits of sweating for detoxification, production of heat shock proteins, and increased circulation, among many others. The cold increases parasympathetic tone, reduces inflammation, improves mitochondrial function, improves digestion, among many other benefits.

- Heat Therapy Options

- Infrared Sauna
- Swedish Sauna
- Hot Yoga
- Steam Room

***Avoid steam rooms if water is not filtered.

- Cold Therapy Options

- Cryotherapy Chamber
- Cold Contrast Showers
 - Alternate between warm water and cold water for 4 or five rounds of 15 seconds. After a few days of this, increase the cold to 30 seconds. After a few days, increase the cold to one minute. Eventually you should be able to take a pure cold shower.

- Cold Shower or Bath
 - Remember to breathe deeply. This will help with the cold. Don't overdo it right away. You can start with cool water, then move more toward ice baths over time.
 - [Cold Bath Tips](#)
- Ocean or lake swim in moderately cold water

Video 3.5 — Slow Things Down

Video 3.6 — Homework 13

Homework

Estimated days to implement: 7 days

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Assignment

Spend a minimum of 1 hour in nature each day. This can be the beach, swimming in a lake, taking a walk in the woods, or simply walking through a quiet field. If you live in the city, a great option is to find a safe, nearby park.

If possible, touch your feet to the earth, smell the flowers, and take notice of your surroundings. It is important to consciously engage with the natural world as this directly impacts our mood, mental state, energy levels, hormonal balance, and genetic expression.



Assignment

Incorporate at least 15 minutes of sitting or moving meditation each day. Below are just a few examples of meditation worth exploring. Use any type of meditation that calls to you.



- [Body Scan Guided Meditation](#)
- [Forgiveness Guided Meditation](#)
- [Guided Tai Chi For Beginners](#)
- [Guided Qigong For Beginners](#)
- [Guided Yin Yoga For Beginners](#)

Assignment

Incorporate at least a few minutes of breathwork practice each day. Each style of breathwork has unique benefits worth exploring. Some methods can induce extremely powerful responses immediately (such as holotropic), while some are very subtle, yet produce powerful healing with regular practice. Explore, play with different methods, and feel out what's right for you.



- [Holotropic Breathwork Information](#)
- [4-7-8 Breathing Technique](#)
- [Box Breathing](#)