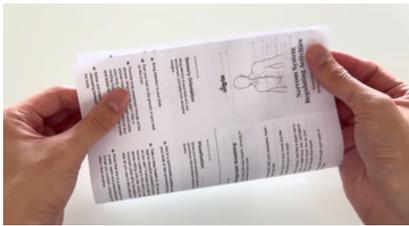


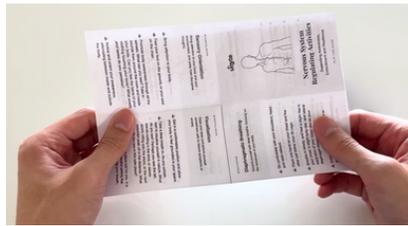


Nervous System Regulating Activities Pocket Guide

This pocket guide gives you quick access to regulating activities whenever you need them. Print the template on pages 2-3 on both sides of a single sheet of 8.5x11" paper, and follow the steps below to create your booklet.



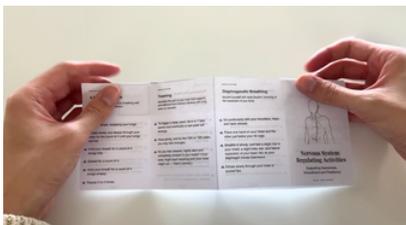
Fold the paper in half, the hamburger way. Repeat twice, then unfold it fully. Make sure the paper has been folded on all the dotted line guides.



Fold the paper in half again only once, the hamburger way, following the dotted line guide. Your paper should have 4 rectangles showing.



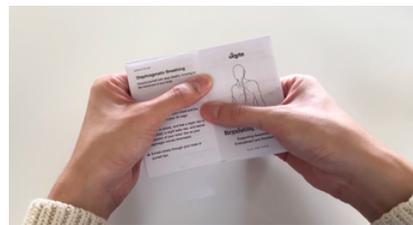
From the folded edge of the paper, cut down the middle along the fold line (follow the pink line guide) to the center of the paper.



Open the paper flat. Fold it only once, the hot dog way.



Hold each side with one hand and push towards the center. The center of the paper will push out to create 4 flaps.



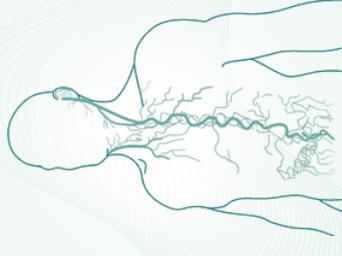
Press down, so the pages line up into a booklet shape. The finished booklet has 8 sides.

To reveal additional activities: Unfold the paper, flip it around, and repeat these folding instructions using the other side.

Need help? Try following [this one-minute video guide](#).

Nervous System Regulating Activities

Supporting Awareness, Embodiment and Resilience



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MINDFULNESS

Sensory Orientation

Bring attention to your body and your environment, and away from disruptive thoughts.



- Bring attention to your body.
- Feel your feet on the ground, or your seat on the chair.
- Promote body awareness through all the senses. What can you see? Take in sounds from around the room and inside your body. Can you feel the fabric of your clothing touching your body? What smells and tastes do you perceive?

Notice and orient your awareness, alternating between inside and outside the body.



BREATHING

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Ground yourself with deep breaths, focusing on the movement of your body.



- Sit comfortably with your shoulders, head and neck relaxed.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other just below your rib cage.
- Breathe in slowly, and feel a slight rise in your chest, a slight belly rise, and lateral expansion of your lower ribs as your diaphragm moves downward.
- Exhale slowly through your nose or pursed lips.



MINDFULNESS

Visualization

Close your eyes and picture yourself somewhere safe to reduce symptoms of anxiety.



- Get in a comfortable position and allow your body to feel grounded in your space.
- Take a deep breath in. As you exhale, start to visualize yourself in nature. What do you see? Perhaps you see the fall leaves rustling in the wind, or waves slowly rolling onto the shore, or the next mountain peak off in the distance. What else do you see in this safe place?

Know that this is a place just for you. It is a safe, warm and peaceful setting that brings you comfort. Using your breath, return here anytime.



BREATHING

Yawning

Stimulate the part of your brain that supports self-reflection and memory retrieval with a big yawn (or several).



- To trigger a deep yawn, do 9 or 7 fake yawns and eventually a real yawn will emerge.
- Keep going, and by the 10th or 12th yawn, you may feel changes.
- Do you feel relaxed, highly alert and completely present in your body? (Your eyes might start watering and your nose might run — that's normal.)



VOCALIZATION

Singing and Chanting

Sing a song that's been stuck in your head or a simple chant while taking notice of changes in your mood or focus.



- Take a deep breath in and feel your lungs fill with air.
- In unison or independently, exhale as you chant Ōm (aum), or sing your favorite phrase of music.
- Continue for 1 to 3 minutes.



BREATHING

4-Part Box Breath

Activate the vagus nerve by breathing with rhythm, pause and intention.



- Slowly exhale, emptying your lungs.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose for the count of 4 until your lungs are full.
- Hold your breath for a count of 4 (lungs full).
- Exhale for a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 4 (lungs empty).
- Repeat 3 to 4 times.



VOCALIZATION

Humming

Stimulate the vagus nerve to help calm your nervous system with this simple exercise.



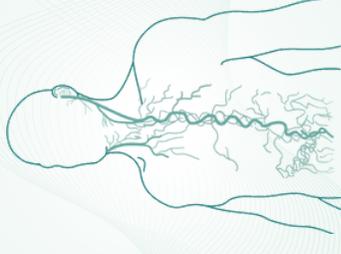
- In unison or independently, hum a familiar tune (don't worry if you're off-key).
- Notice the sensations in your head, throat and chest.
- Experiment with different volumes and physical qualities.



Nervous System Regulating Activities

Supporting Awareness, Embodiment and Resilience

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BREATHING

Resonance Breathing

Use this breathing technique to reduce stress.

- Find a comfortable position.
- Inhale and exhale slowly for several rounds of breath.
- Breathe in for 5 seconds and out for 5 seconds (6 breaths per minute).
- Continue this pattern for several minutes.

MOVEMENT

Self-Touch

Practice self-love with a hug, which has been shown to help lower stress.

- Give yourself a hug while gently rocking side to side.
- Place your hand on your heart, pushing downwards to give yourself grounding pressure.

BREATHING

Extended Exhale

Slow down your breathing through a longer exhalation.

- Find a comfortable position.
- Inhale and exhale slowly for several rounds of breath.
- Begin extending your exhale to twice the length of your inhale (e.g. 2 seconds in, 4 seconds out).
- Maintaining a 1:2 ratio, gradually extend your breath to your comfort (4 seconds in, 8 seconds out).
- Continue this pattern for several minutes.

MOVEMENT

Self-Touch

Practice self-love with a hug, which has been shown to help lower stress.

- Give yourself a hug while gently rocking side to side.
- Place your hand on your heart, pushing downwards to give yourself grounding pressure.

MOVEMENT

Releasing the Neck

Feeling tightness in your neck? Relieve the muscles in this area to decompress the vagus nerve.

- Roll your shoulders up, back and down, and direct your gaze forward.
- Slowly begin tipping your right ear toward your right shoulder, without turning your head.
- Shift your attention to the left side of your neck. When you feel it fully lengthened, bring your eye gaze to the right and take 4 to 6 deep breaths while noticing the sensation in the left side of your neck.
- Return your head and gaze to the starting position, and repeat on the left side.

MOVEMENT

Gentle Shaking

Follow this qigong practice that tells us, in essence, to shake it out.

- Stand up and place your feet hip-distance apart.
- Lift up onto your toes and press your heels back into the floor beneath you.
- Slowly and gently start to lightly shake your body.
- You may start to feel the shaking first in your limbs and muscles, but as you continue, let it sink deeper into your muscles, tissues and other body parts.

MOVEMENT

Joint Circles

Relieve key areas of your body from tension you may be feeling with simple exercises.

- Sit or stand in a comfortable position.
- Head/Neck:** Tilt your head toward your right shoulder. Slowly tuck your chin to your chest, then bring your left ear toward your left shoulder. Rotate your head backwards until your chin shines up to the sky.
- Hands/Wrists:** Bring your hands in front of you with palms up. Make gentle circles with your wrists, releasing any tension you feel in your joints.

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