

*The Nervous System &  
Regulation Practices*

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## *The Nervous System & Regulation Practices*

The nervous system is our internal processor, telling every organ in our body how to respond or react to every situation we encounter each day. It is programmed from our genetics and from our life experiences. Most patterns are running without our conscious awareness, and each response of the nervous system is intentional, even if it is reacting in a way that does not match the situation. Sometimes we are aware of this experience, most of the time we are unaware of the response of our nervous system.

The Vagus Nerve, the longest cranial nerve, is the main communicator between the heart, gut, and brain. This nerve delivers information to each organ through a series of chemical reactions in the body, resulting in an internal experience, that we then label as safe or unsafe.

When something happens that causes an intense response, we feel it in our body, causing a sensational reaction that we then label as an emotion. Each emotion creates a variety of sensations in the body. The emotion is not the problem. The problem becomes our inability to process the emotional energy from a place of regulation and safety.

Most people are trained to avoid their feelings, and therefore when a feeling becomes activated, they do everything they can to repress, numb, avoid, or reject what they feel.

In order to no longer be as deeply affected by your emotions, and instead be able to let them move through you, it is important to know how to manage and regulate your nervous system so integration can occur.

Regulation is the ability to bring the nervous system into balance.

- Breath is slow, deep, full.
- Digestion is optimal.
- Immune system function is high.
- Feelings of peace and ease, present, alive, healthy.
- Recover from stress faster and more easily.

The Autonomic Nervous System controls bodily functions not consciously controlled. We have 3 nervous system states: fight/flight, social engagement, and freeze/faint. These 3 states are activated by our internal perception of threat or safety, our neuroception, a term originated by Stephen Porges, founder of PolyVagal Theory.

- The Sympathetic Nervous System is the fight or flight response alerting of a stressful situation.
- The Parasympathetic Nervous System is the rest and digest response, where deep relaxation and healing occurs. Another function of this response is the safe & social response (ventral vagus nerve) where we engage from a place of being-ness. In extreme parasympathetic response, we are in a faint/freeze response (dorsal vagus nerve).

Integration is when the body and mind are working together for harmony, instead of against each other, creating further stress.

To simplify this information, we are going to use a 0-10 scale model.



If our nervous system functions on a 0-10 scale, with 0 being a freeze/faint response, and 10 being a fight/flight response, the goal is to stay within the safe & social, around 4-6. This is what is referred to as the Window of Tolerance.



This way you are able to be aware of when you are shifting into an extreme sympathetic response of 9-10, which is the anxiety, panic, fear (fight/flight), or into the extreme parasympathetic response, 0-1, freeze/faint, that feeling of being stuck.

Healing happens in a parasympathetic response, with safety and regulation. This means that when you feel frozen or anxious, it is very hard to feel safe. No integration can occur in these heightened states. When you practice these skills when you are already calm, you are teaching your nervous system a new way, increasing resilience, and reprogramming your inner software.

When you find yourself triggered or activated, ask yourself,

“Where am I on the scale of 0-10?”

If you are shifting into 8-10, then do the Down Regulating practices.

If you are shifting into 0-2, then do the Up Regulating practices.

When you are feeling calm, be sure to practice your 3 favorite regulation practices every day. Remember, this is how you increase resilience to stress. The stronger and more resilience your nervous system, the less affected you are by stress. In the moments of heightened stress, it can be difficult to recall what to do. When you practice each day, you are programming into your system an automatic response. The result will be a lowered stress response and increased capacity to stay within your window of tolerance.

## *Ways to increase your Window of Tolerance*

- Mindfulness
- Yoga postures
- Breathwork
- Exercise - steady movements, not too intense
- Healthy Nutrition
- Chanting
- Dance
- Singing
- EFT
- Yoga Nidra
- Meditation
- Weight Lifting with more reps than heavy weight
- Energy Diffusion Technique
- Tai Chi
- Qi Gong
- Art
- Nature
- Reading Scripture, inspirational stories/books
- Establish and/or evaluate Boundaries

**Regulation practices to help bring balance and harmony to the body/mind complex**



## *Practices to come out of Fight/Flight response (8-10 on scale)*

- Increase length of exhalation to 6-8 count, inhale is shorter at 3-4.
- Take a brisk walk
- Belly breathing
- Connect with someone you feel safe and comfortable with - a hug, sitting with them
- Cold Shower - as cold as you can handle for as long as you can handle, then warm water rinse
- Puzzles
- Crosswords
- Count backwards from 100 to zero
- 5 senses exercise: name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing positive about yourself
- Listen to calming music
- Meditation only after breath is steady
- Punch pillow, scream into pillow
- Weighted blanket
- Tension/Relaxation exercises
- Lavender essential oil, Frankincense essential oil
- Yoga Poses: Child's pose, Legs up the wall, Reclined Twist, Downward Facing Dog, seated forward folds, standing forward fold



*Practices to come out of Frozen response  
(0-2 on scale)*

- Increase length of inhalation, sighing out on exhalation
- 25 jumping jacks or moderate movement of any kind
- Get outside in nature, sunshine if possible
- Color
- Cold Shower - as cold as you can handle for as long as you can handle, then warm water rinse
- Bergamot essential oil, Peppermint essential oil, grapefruit essential oil
- Kaleidoscope, switch eyes
- Massage your feet
- Listen to uplifting music
- Singing/Chanting
- Drink Hot Tea or Coffee
- Wall sits with feet pushing into floor - get legs activated
- Yoga Poses: Chair pose, Warrior 1, 2, Sun Salutations, Plank, Downward Facing Dog



## *Practices that bring balance to both:*

- Circular Breathing - inhale and exhale with mouth slightly open, imaging breath traveling up the back body as you inhale, and down the front body as you exhale. No pause at top or bottom, creating a circular flow of breath, just like an ocean wave. Do this for 10 minutes.
- 7 Deep Cleansing breaths - inhale through nose, audible exhale
- Going on a brisk walk for at least 15 minutes.
- Drink a glass of ice water
- 25 jumping jacks counting out loud
- Sing/Chant
- Dance
- Hula Hooping
- Cold Shower Rinse
- Yoga Poses: Sun Salutations, Downward Facing Dog, Triangle Pose, Pyramid Pose, Warrior 2, Legs up the Wall,
- Yoga Nidra Guided Meditation
- Tapping - look up EFT on YouTube
- Labeling what you are feeling, where you are feeling it in your body, deep breathing, move that part of the body
- Talk with someone you feel safe and comfortable sharing your feelings
- A hug with someone you love
- Butterfly Tapping - cross arms at chest as if giving yourself a hug, alternate tapping each hand on each side of the chest, while gently rocking back and forth





## *Practices that bring balance to both, continued:*

- Finger tapping with I AM affirmation, "I am calm now."
- Being held or therapeutic touch by someone you love or feel safe with sharing
- Hug an animal
- 5 senses exercise: name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing positive about yourself
- Count backwards from 100 to zero out loud slowly
- Say the ABCs backwards
- Body Scan awareness: Feet, Ankles, Knees, Hips, Abdomen, Chest, Arms, Hands, Shoulders, Throat, Face, Top of Head, Back of head, Spine, Calves, Soles of Feet
- Hand on Heart, Hand on Belly Breathing
- Get outside (in the sunshine) if you can

**Remember, the goal is to be rational in mind, aware of sensations on your body, able to name your emotions, and take the right action at the right time.**





## About Kate

Kate Shipp is a life-long seeker of Truth and Love. She is a Certified Yoga Therapist by the International Association of Yoga Therapists. She holds an ERYT500 and continuing education provider title through Yoga Alliance. She is also a Reiki Master Teacher, Spiritual Coach, and Yoga Teacher Trainer.

She specializes in working with clients in recovery from C/PTSD, trauma, chronic pain, depression, anxiety, and other health imbalances. She blends yoga therapy, energy medicine, and intuitive coaching to help her clients find a deep well of peaceful safety inside, reclaiming their joy, and remembering their wholeness. Her work is done in-person or remotely, and can be combined with other approaches of medicine and wellness.

Kate is a best-selling author of *I Am Strong Enough Now*, *God, Thanks, My Journey From Trauma To Truth*, along with two compilation books and a motivational speaker.

She is the founder and creator of **The Shipp Method**™. Her work as a yoga therapist was featured in a documentary called, *The Box: Out of the Impossible*, a story of recovery from horrific trauma and abuse. Her greatest joys are her two children, and the soul love of her husband. Her dog and cats complete her family. She grounds herself in faith, and cherishes the magic and joy in the ordinary moments.



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