

Tips To Stimulate

Your Vagus Nerve

The vagus nerve is our "wandering nerve" and starts at the brainstem. It is one of the longest cranial nerves and innervates the muscles of the face, throat, respiration, digestion, and heart. Working with the vagal nerve is key because it allows us to relax, rest, recover, and digest. It can also help us be connected to ourselves and others, be more present, happy, and grounded.

Intention: Energetically set your day with a quick blessing. For example - "may I be happy and safe." Smile knowing that you are switching on the vagus nerve and easing your mind.

Cold water: (1) Splash cold water on your face (four times); (2) at the end of your shower rinse with cold water; and/or (3) place a cold compress on your face or back of neck. By doing any of these activities your sympathetic (fight or flight response) quiets and awakens your parasympathetic activity (rest and relax).

Breathwork: Deep breathing and relaxation sends a signal to your brain to tell the anxious part that you're safe and don't need to use the fight or flight response. Deep breathing gets more oxygen to the thinking brain.

Movement is medicine: When we move, we feel better. Tension dissipates, circulation of blood and energy flows allowing our heart and breathing rates to optimize, improves digestion, respiration and immune system and tones the vagal nerve. Our body enters a state of relaxation and healing. If possible, practice qigong outside - enjoy fresh air and sun.

Hum, chant, sigh or sing: The vagus nerve connects to the vocal chords and throat muscles. Activating these muscles increases your vagal tone. Even a simple sigh (ahhhhhhh) makes you feel better.

Laughter: When we laugh, our face, jaw and throat muscles relax while gently energizing the vagal nerve and setting your body and mind at ease.

Gargle: Pour yourself a cup of water. Take about a quarter cup and gargle it vigorously for 20-30 seconds. Swallow that water and take another quarter cup and gargle that 20-30 seconds. Keep repeating until all the water in the cup is gone. Repeat the above gargling exercise 3-4 times/day, if desired.

