



10 SIGNS YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM IS STUCK IN FIGHT OR FLIGHT

A Top 10 at 10 Companion Guide

10

You Feel Wired But Tired

Running on empty, yet wide awake

Kristi says: One small sign your body never got the memo that it is safe to rest.
STAT Three out of four adults regularly feel this exact wired but tired combination.

9

Trouble Falling or Staying Asleep

Sleep feels vulnerable to a guarded body

Kristi says: If your nervous system senses a threat, it will not let you fully power down.
STAT 74% of adults say stress has disrupted their sleep.

8

Shallow, Chest Only Breathing

Quick breaths keep the alarm going

Kristi says: Slow, deep breathing tells your whole body it is finally safe to relax.
STAT Deep breathing activates the vagus nerve, your built in calm down switch.

7

A Clenched Jaw or Grinding Teeth

Stress you work out in your sleep

Kristi says: A sore jaw in the morning might be your nervous system processing the day.
STAT Dentists report a sharp rise in grinding and clenching tied to rising stress nationwide.

6

Tension in Your Shoulders and Neck

Bracing for a hit that never comes

Kristi says: An old protective instinct that forgot how to stand down.
STAT Massage and physical therapists say this is often the first place stress shows up.

5

Getting Startled or Feeling Irritable

A threat threshold set too low

Kristi says: Not a personality flaw. Just a nervous system scanning for danger a little too often.
STAT Ordinary annoyances can hit like emergencies when your alert system is stuck on.

4

Racing Thoughts at Night

Your mind picks the worst time to catch up

Kristi says: The moment your body finally slows down, your brain decides to replay the whole day.
STAT Anxious thoughts often show up before the insomnia does, not after.

3

Craving Sugar or Caffeine

Not a willpower problem, it is chemistry

Kristi says: Elevated cortisol pushes your body toward quick energy and sugary comfort food.
STAT Eating them briefly calms your stress response, which is why the cycle is so hard to break.

2

Digestive Issues That Never Settle

Your gut has a brain of its own

Kristi says: When your body is on alert, it slows digestion to send energy elsewhere.
STAT Irritable bowel syndrome affects roughly one in ten Americans, and stress is a consistent trigger.

1

Struggling to Relax, Even With Time Off

When calm starts to feel unfamiliar

Kristi says: None of this is a character flaw. It is a nervous system that forgot how to stand down.
STAT Waiting for the other shoe to drop, even in a peaceful moment, is chronic stress talking.

This guide is for general education and entertainment purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Please contact your healthcare provider with any questions about your health or before making changes based on this information.