

How to Self-Check Your Stress Resilience Each Day?

Everyday ways to self-check your stress resilience, aka vagal tone. You don't need to "test" it. You just notice how transitions go.

So here are questions to ask yourself to assess your current stress resilience, as well as see the respective impact of progesterone, a key influence on stress resilience for both men and women.

How do you wake up?

- Ask yourself:
 - Do I wake up gradually or abruptly?
 - Is my breath shallow or deep?
 - Does my body feel braced before my mind turns on?
- Interpretation:
 - Gradual, grounded waking → good baseline vagal tone
 - Immediate tension or urgency → overnight sympathetic dominance
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone supports deep sleep and smooth morning cortisol rise.
 - Poor waking often means progesterone buffering wasn't sufficient overnight.

How does your body respond after caffeine?

- Notice:
 - Do you feel focused and warm?
 - Or jittery, anxious, or flat?
- Interpretation:
 - Clean focus → vagus can buffer stimulation
 - Jitters or crash → low buffering capacity
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone dampens overstimulation at GABA receptors. Without it, small stimulants feel like threats.

After an emotionally activating conversation

- Ask:
 - Does my body settle within 20–30 minutes?
 - Or do I replay it for hours?

- Interpretation:
 - Quick settling → strong vagal recovery
 - Rumination or tight chest → incomplete stress resolution
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone helps emotional “edges” soften after activation.

After physical effort

- Notice:
 - Do I feel pleasantly tired?
 - Or depleted and wired?
- Interpretation:
 - Pleasant fatigue → cortisol resolved
 - Wired/exhausted → sympathetic hangover
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone helps cortisol turn off.
 - Without it, effort lingers in the system.

How do you feel during transitions?

- Transitions are the clearest mirror.
- Examples:
 - Work → dinner
 - Day → night
 - Alone → social
 - Busy → still
- Interpretation:
 - Smooth transitions → flexible vagal tone
 - Feeling “stuck” → poor downshifting
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone supports state changes. Low buffering = hard transitions.

Your breathing when nothing is “wrong”

- Check in randomly:
 - Is your breath low and wide?
 - Or high and shallow?
- Interpretation:
 - Deep spontaneous breathing → parasympathetic access
 - Shallow chest breathing → ongoing vigilance
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone increases GABA, which naturally deepens breath.

Your response to rest

- This is a big one. Ask:
 - Does rest feel nourishing?
 - Or uncomfortable, restless, or pointless?
- Interpretation:
 - Rest that restores → safe parasympathetic tone
 - Rest that agitate → nervous system distrusts stillness
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone is active during rest.
 - If rest feels unsafe, progesterone can't do its job.

Emotional range over a day

- Notice:
 - Can I feel multiple emotions without getting stuck?
 - Or do emotions spike or flatten?
- Interpretation:
 - Fluid emotional range → strong vagal tone
 - Extremes or numbness → regulation strain
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone metabolizes into allopregnanolone, which smooths emotional processing.

Digestive response to meals

- Ask:
 - Do I feel warm and relaxed after eating?
 - Or bloated, sleepy, or anxious?
- Interpretation:
 - Comfortable digestion → parasympathetic dominance
 - Digestive distress → stress physiology active
- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone supports gut motility and reduces stress-related GI symptoms.

How quickly you recover from small stressors

- Examples:
 - Being cut off in traffic
 - A critical email
 - Running late
- Interpretation:
 - Brief irritation → quick return to baseline = good tone
 - Lingering activation → low recovery capacity

- Progesterone link:
 - Progesterone prevents stress hormones from overstaying.