

Reset in 3 Questions

A 5-Minute Guide for High-Achievers to Reset Their Nervous System

Introduction

In the midst of a busy day, high-achievers often push through stress signals rather than addressing them. This guide offers a simple yet powerful 3-question framework to quickly reset your nervous system, improve focus, and enhance overall wellbeing. Practice this 5-minute reset whenever you feel overwhelmed, distracted, or simply need a moment to recenter.

Question 1: "Where do I feel this in my body?"

Why this matters: Physical sensations are your body's way of communicating stress. By locating these sensations, you interrupt the stress cycle and begin regulating your nervous system.

Practice:

- Pause and close your eyes if possible
- Take three deep breaths, extending your exhale
- Scan your body from head to toe
- Notice areas of tension, discomfort, or unusual sensation
- Simply observe without judgment
- Name what you feel (e.g., "tightness in my shoulders," "flutter in my stomach")

Common physical stress signals:

- Tension in neck, shoulders, or jaw
- Shallow breathing or chest tightness
- Stomach discomfort or butterflies
- Headache or pressure behind the eyes
- Restless legs or fidgeting hands

Question 2: "What's the story I'm telling myself right now?"

Why this matters: Our internal narratives drive emotional responses. Identifying these stories allows you to separate facts from interpretations.

Practice:

- Notice your current thoughts without trying to change them
- Write down the narrative playing in your mind
- Look for absolutes (always, never, everyone, no one)
- Identify catastrophic thinking or worst-case scenarios
- Recognize when you're mind-reading others' intentions

Common unhelpful narratives:

- "I'll never get everything done"
- "This mistake proves I'm not qualified"
- "Everyone will notice I'm struggling"
- "I have to handle this perfectly"
- "I should be further along by now"

Question 3: "What do I *actually* need in this moment?"

Why this matters: This question cuts through habitual responses to identify genuine needs, allowing for targeted self-care rather than default coping mechanisms.

Practice:

- Check in with basic needs first (hydration, nutrition, movement)
- Consider emotional needs (connection, reassurance, validation)
- Ask what would truly help, not just what feels familiar
- Choose one small, immediate action you can take

Common needs and helpful responses:

- **Physical:** Water, protein snack, stretch break, brief walk
- **Mental:** Task prioritization, breaking work into smaller steps
- **Emotional:** Brief chat with a supportive person, five minutes of journaling
- **Environmental:** Reduced noise, adjusted lighting, cleared workspace
- **Boundaries:** Delayed response to non-urgent messages, scheduled focused work time

Making This a Habit

For best results:

- Keep this guide visible at your workspace
- Set calendar reminders to check in with yourself
- Practice these questions daily, not just during high stress
- Share this framework with your team to normalize reset breaks
- Track patterns in your responses to identify your personal stress triggers

Remember

The most productive people aren't those who push through discomfort—they're those who respond wisely to their body's signals. This reset practice isn't just self-care; it's a strategic performance tool.