



Vagus Nerve Stimulation Worksheet

Created in collaboration with anxiety expert
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This is a practical guide to stimulating the all-important vagus nerve, which runs throughout your body.



Stimulate the Vagus Nerve

A key pathway to calm that runs through your entire body.



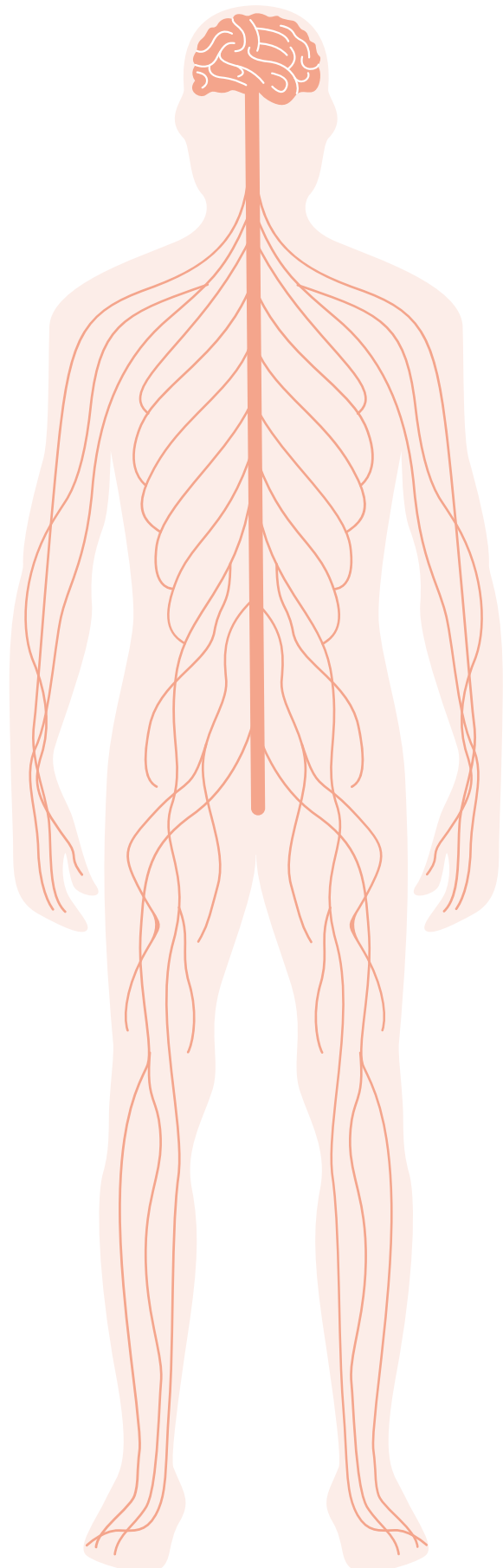
Soothe Anxiety Physically

These tools work from the body up, not just the mind down.



Better Together

Use vagus nerve practices and CBT side-by-side to address anxiety on multiple levels (see our CBT worksheets).





Eye Movement

1

Get Comfortable

Sit or lie down with your head facing straight ahead. Keep your head still throughout.

2

Eyes Left

Shift your gaze to the left without turning your head. Hold for about 30 seconds.

3

Feel the Shift

You may notice a release: a sigh, yawn, deep breath, or even the urge to cry. That's your nervous system responding.

4

Eyes Right

Now look to the right and hold for another 30 seconds.



Butterfly Hug

1

Get Into Position

Sit or lie comfortably. Cross your arms over your chest, placing your hands on your shoulders or upper arms.

2

Form the Butterfly

Interlace your thumbs. Your hands will look like butterfly wings when you look down.

3

Start the Rhythm

Gently tap your hands left–right–left–right in a slow, steady rhythm.

4

Send a Safety Signal

This bilateral movement helps calm the nervous system and tells your body it's safe.



Ear Massage

The vagus nerve runs just behind your ears. Massaging this area helps activate it and signals safety to your body.

1

Find the Spot

Use your fingers to locate the area just behind your ear, between the ear and the hairline.

2

Massage Gently

Move your fingers in slow, upward and downward strokes. Stay soft and relaxed.

3

Feel the Shift

This gentle stimulation can calm your parasympathetic nervous system, helping you feel grounded, safe, and at ease.



Orienting

When we feel unsafe, our brain zooms in on whatever it perceives as a threat, even if it's not actually there. This narrowed focus is the body's way of preparing to fight, flee, or freeze.

Orienting helps reverse that. By gently looking around, you remind your body: I'm safe now.

1

Move Slowly

Slowly turn your head and let your eyes move around the room. Look side to side, glance behind you, and try tracing gentle figure 8s with your gaze.

2

Take It In

Let your gaze rest on objects. Notice colors, shapes, and light. You can even name what you see out loud.

3

Send the Signal

This tells your nervous system there's no threat and helps shift you into calm.



Humming

Humming gently activates the vagus nerve, sending calming signals throughout your body.

It not only sounds soothing, it feels soothing too.

1

Pick Your Sound

Try a soft “hmmm,” an “om,” or even hum a tune. Whatever feels natural to you.

2

Feel the Vibration

Notice the sensation in your throat, chest, or face. Mindfully track the vibration as it moves through your body.

3

Use It Often

Humming throughout your day helps your system settle and signals: you're safe.



Breathwork

Breathwork isn't just calming. It's a powerful tool to regulate your nervous system.

Certain breathing patterns activate the parasympathetic nervous system, signalling to your body that it's safe.

Build Your Breathwork Toolkit

Explore different techniques and find what works for you. Try:



[Belly Breathing](#)



[Box Breathing](#)



[4-7-8 Breathing](#)



[Ujjayi Breath](#)



Ear Acupressure

The vagus nerve runs just behind your ears. Massaging this area helps activate it and signals safety to your body.



1

Target the Right Spot

The vagus nerve connects through the ear. Find the area shown in the diagram. It's your calm button.

2

Apply Gentle Pressure

Using your finger (your pinky often works best), gently massage the spot in small circles for 30 seconds to 2 minutes.

3

Feel the Release

You might notice a sigh, yawn, deeper breath, or a wave of calm. That's your nervous system unwinding.

4

Use As Needed

Try this anytime anxiety starts to rise or right after a stressful moment.