

Somatics 101: Learning Your Body and Nervous System

Created in collaboration with Licensed Professional Counselor [Katie Fleming Thomas, MS, LPC](#)



[Nervous System Regulation & Somatic Tools](#)

What Makes Somatic and Nervous System (NS) Work Differently?

Unlike traditional talk therapy that focuses on the stories and thoughts in our minds, Somatic and NS work centers on how your body and NS are experiencing life right now. We're not analyzing the "why" or building stories. Instead, we're tuning into the sensations, movements, and responses happening in the body in the moment.

Why This Might Feel New or Challenging

Most of us live mostly in "mind space", thinking and analyzing. Learning to listen to your body is like learning a new language and needs practice. Sometimes, your mind feels "fine" while your body still holds tension or stress. Somatic and NS work helps you notice these differences and give both body and mind a voice.

Getting Started: Steps to Listen to Your Body

Here are some foundational approaches to begin this process. Remember, this work develops over time, and subtle changes are significant. You don't need big, dramatic shifts. Small noticing and gentle movements create meaningful change. Think of it as practice, not perfection.



1. Practice Noticing

The foundation of Somatic and NS Work is simple, consistent awareness. Ask yourself: "What am I noticing in my body right now as I think about a situation, feel an emotion, or engage in an activity?" Again, you're not making a story, or analyzing, just noticing.

Possible sensations include:

- Warmth, coolness
- Tingling, pulsing, buzzing
- Tightness, tension, heaviness, pressure, contraction
- Lightness, ease, expansion, softening
- Numbness, blankness, "nothing"



2. Titrate Your Experience

Trying to feel everything at once can be like drinking from a fire hose, too much, too fast. Titration helps you take things in little by little so your system can stay present and regulated.

If paying attention feels overwhelming, take it in small steps, like dipping your toe in the water instead of diving in.

- Notice your body briefly
- Shift outward (to your breath, your surroundings, or a neutral sound).

This back-and-forth keeps things safe and steady.



3. Stay Curious With What You Find

This is the real work. Once you notice something in your body, stay curious about it rather than trying to fix, change, or understand it immediately.

- If it feels pleasant or easing, ask: “How do I know?” Notice exactly what signals safety or calm.
- If it feels uncomfortable, try a gentle shift, breathe differently, move a little, or change focus. Notice what happens next.
- If you feel numb or blank, treat that as a valid experience. Ask: “What do I notice around the numbness?” “What happens is move, or hold something, or just be the numbness?”



Reflection Questions

1. What do you most often notice when you check in with your body?

2. How does your body signal safety, ease, or unease?

3. What helps you return to balance when sensations feel overwhelming?

Further Worksheets on Somatics by Katie Fleming Thomas, MS, LPC:

- [Stress Vortex and Resource Vortex](#)
- [Sensory Orientation Technique](#)
- [Understanding Your Nervous System Regulators](#)
- [Window of Tolerance: Nervous System Zones](#)
- [Recognize and Regulate Your Activation Responses](#)