



THE THREAT BUCKET QUIZ

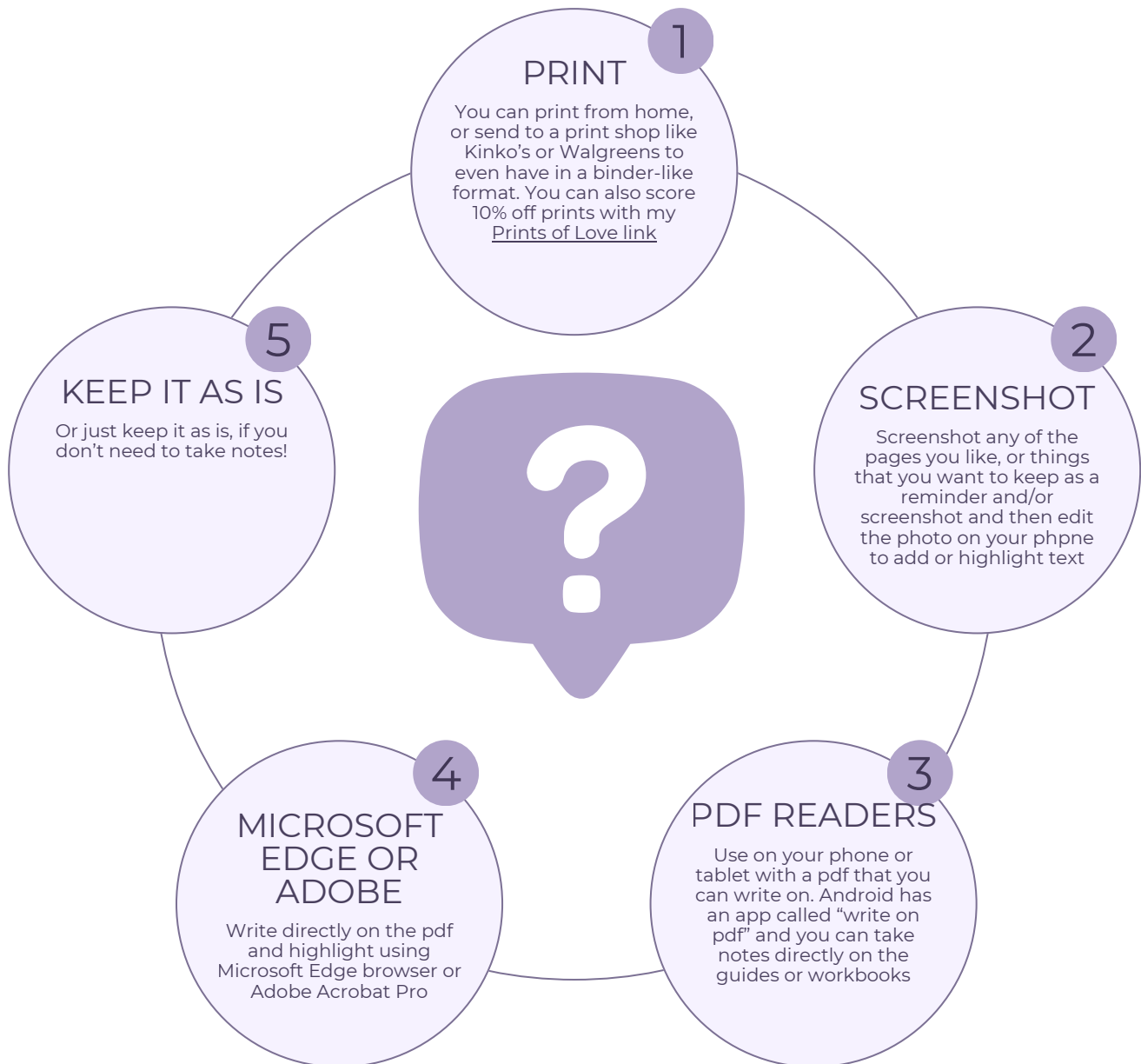
*What life events contribute to the threat bucket and
how it relates to your pain*

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Ways You Can Use This Guide:

Here are Some Suggested Uses

If you like to take personal notes or be an active reader, there are ways you can still use this pdf guide to do that.



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respecting the
hard work for the
author**

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Consult with a clinician in your care

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Using neurology to ease unexplained symptoms for medically dismissed adults

About the Author

Hi! I'm Sara Becker, DPT (doctorate of physical therapy), neuro physical therapist and founder of **Releaseology**.

For over 12 years, I've helped adults with **unexplained symptoms** understand how stress and the brain can affect pain, dizziness, digestion, fatigue, and more. My goal is simple: **help your symptoms finally make sense.**



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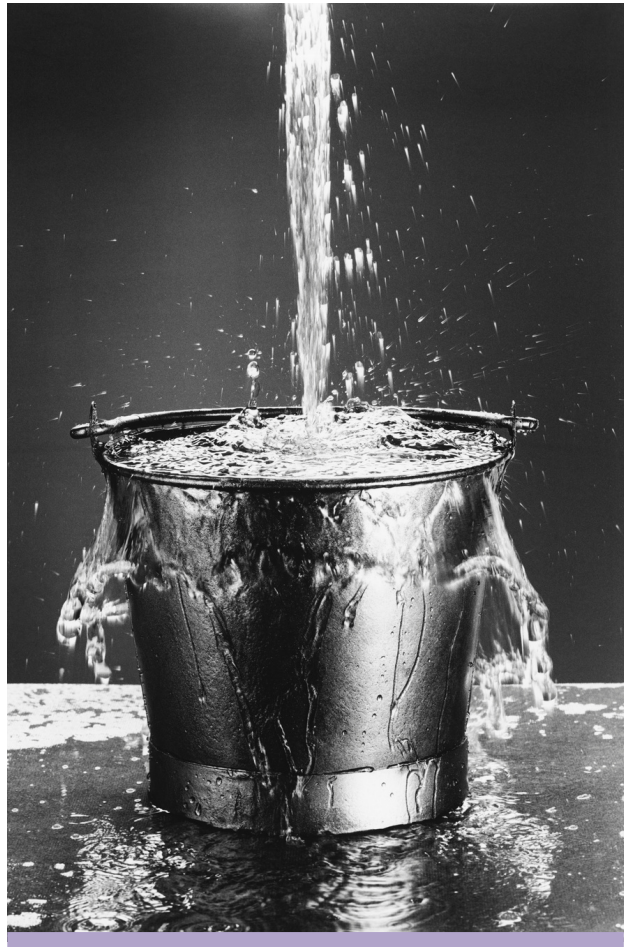
Introduction

*This chapter explores
understanding what the threat
bucket is*

The Threat Bucket

I always tell my patients — everyone has a threat bucket. It's our brain's running tally of how much stress, pain, or "threat" our system can handle before it starts to overflow.

That bucket includes **every single experience you've ever had** — the physical injuries, the emotional upsets, the stressful jobs, the breakups, the surgeries, even the "small stuff" that you thought you brushed off years ago. Your brain doesn't separate physical from emotional or big from small. It just counts events.



When the bucket fills up, your nervous system starts to sound the alarm — pain, fatigue, anxiety, irritability, or a random flare-up of an old injury.

That's when you hear people say things like:

“
“I just picked up a napkin and threw my back out,” or
“I didn't even do anything and suddenly my shoulder
started hurting again.”

It's not random. **The bucket was already full** — that last little stressor was just the drop that made it overflow. By heightening the communication to your brain like vision, hearing, smell, this makes sure your brain is accurately relay information to your body to accurately discern from real versus perceived threat.

What I Saw in Neuro Rehab

Treating Stroke, Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury and More

When I worked in neuro rehab, I didn't know about the threat bucket yet, but I saw it all the time.

My stroke and brain injury patients would often tell me,

*“My ankle is acting up again,
it hasn't bothered me in years” or
“My wrist pain came back from high school.”*

*Then it clicked. What I realized was that their **brain had to prioritize.***

*When the nervous system is focused on healing from something big — like a stroke or brain injury — **it doesn't have as much capacity to manage everything else.***

It was eye-opening to realize how much work our body does behind the scenes just to keep those old injuries quiet. Once the brain's attention shifts elsewhere, those “stored” threats can surface again.

Not to mention, each patient's support system and attitude in rehab really played a large role in their prognosis.



I have an in depth (6 minute) video
talking about the threat bucket in [this video](#)

The Silent Overflow

My hamstrings were so tight you could bounce a quarter off them.

It was a Thursday, when I worked out way too hard — one of those “I feel so strong” kind of workouts. By Friday morning, my hamstrings felt like solid rock. I was still using my hands to push myself up from chairs by Friday night. (If you know, you know.)

But here’s the wild part — I reviewed vision drills the next day and right after, my hamstrings tested better. Vision drills. As in, eyes. 🙄

Even so, by bedtime, I figured I’d be sore for days. I told myself, “See you Monday, mobility.” But Saturday morning came, and halfway through the day, I realized something shocking — I wasn’t using my hands to stand anymore. My muscles felt bouncy. The tightness? Gone.

All from working with my eyes.

That’s the crazy (and amazing) thing about the nervous system — sometimes the issue isn’t the muscle itself but the threat the brain perceives. Reduce the threat, and the body lets go.

And the best part?

All of this — vision drills, nervous system work, root-cause testing — is included in every Releaseology session. I never charge extra for the good stuff.

And for all of you who know how much I swear by topical magnesium... This was better than magnesium!

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The Threat Bucket Quiz

This chapter explores your specific threat bucket and self-inventory.

How Full is Your Threat Bucket?

A 5-Minute Nervous System Self-Check

If you've ever said, "I didn't even do anything, and my back went out," or "I'm exhausted, but I can't relax," – your Threat Bucket might be overflowing.

This self-assessment helps you see how full your bucket is – physically, emotionally, and mentally – and where your biggest drains and stressors might be hiding. Take a deep breath. Be honest.

This isn't about judgment – it's about awareness.

Scale: 1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Almost Always. For things like procedures, and injuries, use the scale as a number. For instance, you've had 5 or more procedures or surgeries, give yourself a 5. If you've had 0-1 you would choose 1

Physical Load	1	2	3	4	5
I've had a surgery, injury or medical procedure (Enter # of items 0-1 you would check 1, 5 or more, you would check 5)					
I have had injuries (Enter # of items 0-1 you would check 1, 5 or more, you would check 5)					
I live with pain, inflammation, or muscle tension.					
My sleep is irregular, interrupted, or not restorative.					
I feel drained or heavy after workouts.					
I have headaches, clenching or physical tension.					

Body Reflection

When my body asks for rest, do I listen or push through?

Scale: 1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Almost Always.

Emotional & Mental Load	1	2	3	4	5
I feel emotionally sensitive, reactive, or easily overwhelmed.					
I'm in a constant state of thinking, planning, or overanalyzing.					
I've gone through loss, grief, or major life change. (Enter # of items 0-1 you would check 1, 5 or more, you would check 5)					
I suppress emotions to "hold it together."					
I worry about letting people down or not doing enough.					
I feel mentally tired, even when I haven't done much.					

Environmental Load	1	2	3	4	5
My environment feels noisy, cluttered or overstimulating.					
I spend most of my day on screens or under bright/artificial lights.					
I'm frequently in toxic or draining environments (home, work, social).					
I rarely get time in nature, fresh air, or natural light.					
I feel tension or discomfort just being in certain spaces.					
I often multitask and feel pulled in many directions.					

Social + Identity Load	1	2	3	4	5
I feel responsible for taking care of everyone else's needs.					
I have relationships that drain more than they fill.					
I feel unseen, unheard, or misunderstood by people close to me.					
I hide or minimize parts of who I am to "keep the peace."					
I'm (currently or in the past) navigating major identity shifts (caregiver, parent, loss, career change).					
I struggle to ask for help or set boundaries.					

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Connection Reflection

Who feels safe and supportive in my life - and who triggers tension or self-doubt?

Scale: 1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Almost Always.

Awareness + Capacity	1	2	3	4	5
I recognize when I'm near overwhelm and can pause or reset.					
I know what helps me calm my nervous system when I feel tense.					
I regularly do things that help me recharge (movement, rest, laughter, connection).					
I tend to wait until I'm at my limit before addressing stress or pain.					
My system recovers quickly after stress or challenge.					

Integration Reflection

Am I reacting to stress — or responding with awareness?

Your Results

Add up your points (or tally the number of “4s” and “5s”):

15-35

Your Bucket Has Space

You're managing stress well, but keep tending to your drains (breath, rest, boundaries).

36-60

Your Bucket is Half Full

Some tension, fatigue, or overwhelm may be creeping in — small daily regulation habits can help.

61-85

Your Bucket is Overflowing

Your nervous system is overloaded and asking for deeper support. This is where Releaseology helps you drain safely.

Let's Empty Your Bucket

If you recognize yourself in these results – you're not broken, you're full. And the good news? You can change that.

At Releaseology, I help you:

- Drain stored stress through hands-on bodywork and neuro-informed techniques*
- Rebuild your capacity so your system doesn't overflow again*

**Book Your Virtual or In Person
Session Today at
www.releaseology.com/booknow**

**You don't need to push through it -
you just need to release it.**

Reflection - Seeing the Patterns

*Take a breath. Look back over your answers. This is your body's roadmap.
Which categories had the most checkmarks?*

Physical

Emotional & Mental

Environmental

Social + Identity

Awareness + Capacity

What surprised you?

Where do you feel the biggest disconnect between knowing what to do and actually doing it?

Which "drains" feel easiest to add back into your life right now?

Want More?

Purchase the full Threat Bucket Guide here. In this guide, I walk you through examples of what is in your bucket, how to measure how full your bucket is and how to drain the bucket

If you liked this guide, I am always working on more resources as well

For the most up-to-date guides, head to:

www.releaseology.com/threatbucket-resources

Book a virtual session or in-person session in Tempe, AZ to get one on one personal guidance.

HSA cards accepted in AZ only





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