



Feeling It Without Being Flooded

A nervous system reset toolkit

Let this be gentle. This is not about controlling your feelings, or getting calm on demand. It is about building enough room inside you to feel something fully and come back down from it afterwards. Most of us learned one or the other. Almost nobody was taught both.

Why your body stays on high alert

Your nervous system was built for short bursts of danger. Something threatens you, your body mobilises to fight, flee or freeze, and then, once it passes, the charge discharges and you return to calm. That is the full cycle, and the last part matters as much as the first.

Modern life rarely lets the cycle finish. A difficult conversation, a look, a deadline, a text you are still holding three days later. The activation goes up and never quite comes down. It stays stored in the body and quietly becomes your normal.

Which is why a spilled coffee can feel like an emergency, and why you can understand a pattern completely and still not be able to do the thing. When your body is braced, the thinking part of your brain is not fully online. That is not a mindset problem. That is biology.

YOUR WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

There is a range in which you can feel things and still stay yourself. Inside it you can be upset and still think, still speak, still choose. That range is called your window of tolerance, and it can be widened. Everything in this workbook works from the body upward, which is why it reaches places that reasoning with yourself does not.

“I can feel this fully, and I can come back down from it.”

Notice

Before any tool will help, you need to recognise your own signals. Not the textbook version. What it actually feels like in your body, in your kitchen at seven o'clock. No judgement, just honesty.

WHEN I AM PUSHED OUT OF MY WINDOW

1. What are the first physical signs that I am leaving my window? (jaw, shoulders, chest, stomach, breath)

2. What tends to push me out fastest? Name the specific situations, not the general ones.

3. When I am flooded, what do I do? What do I say, or stop saying?

4. When I shut down instead, what does that look like from the outside?

5. How long does it usually take me to come back down, and what helps it happen?

Gentle truth. Every one of these responses was your body protecting you. It learned to do this when it needed to. You are not overreacting, you are running an old programme very well.

Seven ways to come back

Twenty-one tools, grouped into seven kinds. You do not need all of them. Read through, try the ones that appeal, and tick what you have actually tested. What works for you is what works, regardless of what should.

01 BREATHING & BREATHWORK

Changes your body chemistry within seconds. The most direct way to tell your brain it is safe.

- ☐ **Physiological sigh**
Breathe in through your nose, take a second small sip of air on top, then let a long slow breath out through your mouth. Three to five times. This is the quickest thing you have when something spikes.
- ☐ **Long exhale, 4 in and 6 out**
Count four on the way in, six on the way out. Making the out-breath longer than the in-breath is what does the work. Six to ten rounds.

02 BODY-BASED & SOMATIC RELEASE

Lets out the survival energy that got stuck when the cycle never finished.

- ☐ **Gentle shaking**
Stand with your knees unlocked and shake your hands out, then let it travel up your arms and down through your legs. Stop, and notice what is buzzing.
- ☐ **The wall push**
Press both hands into a wall and push, steadily, breathing out as you do. Somewhere safe for the energy that wants to fight to actually go.
- ☐ **Jaw release**
Let your jaw drop open. Find the hinge just below your ears and rub it in small circles. Let a quiet sound out on the way.

03 COMPASSIONATE TOUCH

Your own hands can give your body the comfort it has been waiting for someone else to offer.

- ☐ **The self-hug**
Wrap your arms across your chest and hold yourself with real pressure, not a token squeeze. Stay there and breathe for a minute or two.
- ☐ **The butterfly hug**
Arms crossed, tap one shoulder and then the other, unhurried, until something in you settles and says that is enough.
- ☐ **Self-compassion**
Ask what you would say to a friend standing where you are. Then say that, in that tone, to yourself.

04 ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDING

Brings you out of the story in your head and back into the room you are standing in.

☐ **Orienting**

Let your eyes travel slowly around the room and name three ordinary things you can see. Notice the temperature and any sound. Then lengthen your out-breath.

☐ **Glimmers**

The opposite of a trigger. Small moments that quietly tell your body it is safe. Start collecting yours, and pause long enough to feel them.

05 COGNITIVE REGULATION

Uses your thinking mind to steady your body. These work best once you are partly back, not at the peak.

☐ **HALT check-in**

Hungry, angry, lonely, tired. Deal with the physical thing before you interrogate the feeling, and hold off on anything big for twenty minutes.

☐ **If-then planning**

Choose your response before you need it, so you are not deciding while flooded. If my jaw clenches, I will drop it and breathe out.

06 VOCAL & VAGAL TONING

Sound creates a vibration in your throat and chest that soothes the system from the inside.

☐ **Humming**

Breathe in through your nose and hum the breath out. You are after the vibration in your lips, face and chest. A minute or two.

☐ **Chanting or soft singing**

A tune you like, under your breath, or one long steady note. Easy, never forced. Singing badly counts.

07 REFLECTIVE PROCESSING

Turns feeling into language. Slower than the rest, and it works on the longer arc.

☐ **Gratitude journalling**

Three specific things from the last day, with the reason attached. The reason is what makes it land rather than bounce off.

☐ **Expressive writing**

Fifteen minutes, pen moving, no editing. Write what happened and what it did to you, and keep going past the point it gets uncomfortable.

Small resets, practised often, beat one big rescue.

Try

A tool you have read about is not yet a tool you have. Test a few this week, ideally when you are only mildly stirred rather than fully flooded. That is how you build the pathway, so it is there when you actually need it.

[illegible]

MY IF-THEN PLANS

Pre-decide, so you are not choosing while flooded. Write four. Keep them small enough to be possible on your worst day.

If _____, then I will _____

If _____, then I will _____

If _____, then I will _____

If _____, then I will _____

Weave it in

Regulation works best as a rhythm rather than a rescue. Choose one or two for each part of the day. Small and repeated beats big and occasional, every time.

MORNING	WORKING HOURS	EVENING
<i>Prime</i>	<i>Maintain</i>	<i>Wind down</i>
A physiological sigh before you touch your phone	A sixty-second shake every hour	A digital sunset an hour before bed
A moment of stillness	Soften your gaze out of a window	Five minutes with your legs up the wall
A breakfast that steadies your blood sugar	Hum or slow-breathe on the go	Close the day with gratitude
<i>Mine:</i>	<i>Mine:</i>	<i>Mine:</i>

MY TOP THREE

Of everything you tried, which three do you want to keep? These are the ones you reach for first, the ones you do not have to think about.

1

WHEN I WILL USE IT

2

WHEN I WILL USE IT

3

WHEN I WILL USE IT

Each time you notice you are outside your window and choose to come back, you are teaching your body something new. Not that the feeling was wrong, but that you will stay with yourself through it. That is the repair. Not one big moment. A thousand small ones.

“I can be with what I feel. I do not have to be swept away by it.”