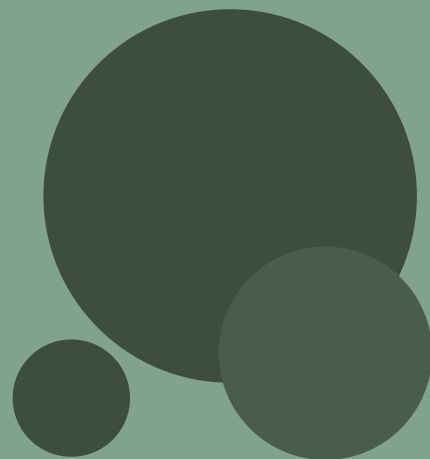


A 21-DAY INNER WORK COMPANION



The Nervous System Reset Toolkit

Daily Journaling Prompts | Breath-work Cards | Somatic Practices
Sleep Protocol | Trauma Release Guide

by Naomi Turvey

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM RESET TOOLKIT

A 21-Day Inner Work Companion

This toolkit is your companion to The Menopause Belly Fix. While the main guide gives you the meals, the movement and the science — this is where the inner work happens. The journaling prompts, the breath-work cards, the somatic practices and the sleep protocol printed here are designed to be used alongside your 21-day reset, one day at a time.

Print this. Put it on your bedside table. Use it every evening.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit has five sections. Each one addresses a different dimension of nervous system regulation — the inner work that makes the outer work (the food, the movement) actually land.

SECTION	WHAT IT IS	WHEN TO USE IT
1. Daily Journal Prompts	21 days of evening journaling questions — one per day, matched to each phase	Every evening — takes 5 minutes
2. Breath-work Cards	6 breath-work techniques with step-by-step instructions — cut out and keep	Morning practice, stress moments, before bed
3. Somatic Practice Guide	7 body-based practices for releasing stored stress and trauma	As needed — especially on high-stress days
4. Sleep Protocol	A complete evening wind-down sequence for deep, restorative sleep	Every evening from Day 1
5. Trauma Release Guide	Understanding and working with your nervous system's stored patterns	Read once, refer to often

You do not need to do all of this perfectly. You do not need to journal every single night. Choose what resonates. Come back to what helps. The nervous system heals through repetition and gentleness — not through adding another thing to the to-do list.

SECTION 1 — 21 DAYS OF JOURNAL PROMPTS

5 minutes each evening. Put your phone down. Pick up a pen.

Journaling is not about writing beautifully or figuring everything out. It is about creating a daily moment of honest witness — of noticing what is actually happening inside you without judgment. Each prompt set has three questions and a daily reflection theme. Answer them briefly or at length — whatever feels right. There are no wrong answers.

PHASE 1 — REGULATE (Days 1-7)

This week's journaling focus: Unidentifying from your story and beginning to witness your body with compassion rather than criticism.

Day 1 — *Meeting Yourself Where You Are* | Phase 1 — REGULATE

- 1. What story am I telling myself about my body right now? (Write it without filtering.)
- 2. What is actually true about my body today — separate from the story?
- 3. One thing my body did today that I can genuinely appreciate:

Today's reflection: *I am not my worst chapter. I am a woman who is choosing to begin again.*

Day 2 — *The Alarm System* | Phase 1 — REGULATE

- 1. Where did I feel stress or tension in my body today? (Jaw? Shoulders? Gut?)
- 2. What triggered it — and was there an actual threat, or did my nervous system respond as though there was?
- 3. What would it feel like to let that tension go? Can I try for 60 seconds right now?

Today's reflection: *My nervous system is not broken. It learned to protect me. I am teaching it a new way.*

Day 3 — *What You're Carrying* | Phase 1 — REGULATE

- 1. What am I carrying today that doesn't belong to this moment? (Old worry, old grief, old anger?)
- 2. If I could put one thing down — even temporarily — what would it be?
- 3. What would today have felt like if I had felt completely safe in my body?

Today's reflection: *Safety is not something I find. It is something I build, one breath at a time.*

Day 4 — *The Pusher and the Nurturer* | Phase 1 — REGULATE

- 1. Today, which voice was louder — the pusher (do more, be more) or the nurturer (you've done enough)?
- 2. Where did I override what my body needed today to keep performing?
- 3. What would the nurturer say to me right now if I let her speak?

Today's reflection: *Rest is not the opposite of achievement. Rest is what makes achievement sustainable.*

Day 5 — *The Silence* | Phase 1 — REGULATE

- 1. When did I last feel truly calm — not just busy enough to forget my worries, but actually calm?
- 2. What does my body feel like in moments of real safety? Where do I notice it physically?
- 3. Today I chose to nourish myself by:

Today's reflection: *I am allowed to take up space. I am allowed to be at rest. I am allowed to be well.*

Day 6 — *Cortisol and Compassion* | Phase 1 — REGULATE

- 1. Looking back at this week — where did I create unnecessary stress for myself?
- 2. What is one habit, thought pattern or obligation that is keeping my nervous system in overdrive?
- 3. If I spoke to myself the way I speak to someone I love, what would I say right now?

Today's reflection: *Compassion for myself is not weakness. It is the foundation of everything I want to change.*

Day 7 — *End of Week One — Witness* | Phase 1 — REGULATE

- 1. What is different about how I feel compared to Day 1 — even subtly?
- 2. What was the hardest moment of this week and what did it teach me?
- 3. I am proud of myself for:

Today's reflection: *Something is shifting beneath the surface. I may not see it yet. I trust the process.*

PHASE 2 — REBALANCE (Days 8-14)

This week's journaling focus: Noticing what your body is asking for — and beginning to trust those signals as information rather than inconvenience.

Day 8 — What's Changed | Phase 2 — REBALANCE

- 1. Is anything different in my body compared to last week — energy, sleep, mood, digestion?
- 2. What has been the easiest part of this reset so far? What has been the hardest?
- 3. One belief about my body that I am starting to question:

Today's reflection: My body is responding. The changes happening beneath the surface are real.

Day 9 — Blood Sugar and Emotions | Phase 2 — REBALANCE

- 1. Did I notice any energy crashes or mood dips today? When? What had I eaten beforehand?
- 2. When I feel an urgent craving, what is it usually for — and what might I actually be needing?
- 3. Today I noticed my body needed:

Today's reflection: Cravings are information. My body is not sabotaging me. It is communicating.

Day 10 — Strength | Phase 2 — REBALANCE

- 1. Where have I been underestimating my physical strength or capability?
- 2. What would I do — physically or in my life — if I fully believed my body was capable?
- 3. One thing I did today that showed me I am stronger than I think:

Today's reflection: I am rebuilding strength from the inside out. Muscle. Bone. Nervous system. Mind.

Day 11 — The Stories We Inherit | Phase 2 — REBALANCE

- 1. What messages did I receive about my body growing up — from family, culture, media?
- 2. Which of those messages am I still carrying? Which ones are simply not true?
- 3. What do I want to believe about my body instead?

Today's reflection: I get to decide what my body means. The old stories were never mine to keep.

Day 12 — Halfway | Phase 2 — REBALANCE

- 1. I am halfway through this reset. What was I expecting it to feel like — and is it different?

- 2. What has surprised me most — about the programme or about myself?
- 3. If I could send a message to the woman I was on Day 1, what would I say?

Today's reflection: *Halfway is not the middle of the work. Halfway is evidence that I show up for myself.*

Day 13 — Fuel vs Punishment | Phase 2 — REBALANCE

- 1. In the past, have I used food as punishment, reward or comfort? Which pattern shows up most?
- 2. What does it feel like to eat in a way that is purely nourishing — with no guilt attached?
- 3. Today I ate something that genuinely made me feel:

Today's reflection: *Food is information my body uses to run itself. It is not a moral judgement on who I am.*

Day 14 — End of Week Two — Integration | Phase 2 — REBALANCE

- 1. Looking at my body signals this week — energy, sleep, mood, digestion — what is changing?
- 2. What nervous system practice has made the most difference for me this week?
- 3. The most important thing I have learned about myself in two weeks of this reset:

Today's reflection: *Two weeks. I showed up for myself for two weeks. That is not small. That is everything.*

PHASE 3 — RESHAPE (Days 15-21)

This week's journaling focus: Consolidating the new identity — moving from 'I am trying to change' to 'I am someone who shows up for herself.'

Day 15 — The New Normal | Phase 3 — RESHAPE

- 1. What feels normal now that would have felt hard or foreign on Day 1?
- 2. Where in my body do I notice the most change — even a small one?
- 3. The habit from this reset I most want to keep forever:

***Today's reflection:** I am not going back to who I was. Not because I failed her — but because I've grown beyond her.*

Day 16 — What Safety Feels Like | Phase 3 — RESHAPE

- 1. Describe a moment this week where your body felt calm, safe, or at ease. What were you doing?
- 2. What conditions create safety in your nervous system? (People, environments, practices, foods?)
- 3. I can create more of those conditions in my daily life by:

***Today's reflection:** Safety is not something that happens to me. It is something I learn to create.*

Day 17 — The Body You're Building | Phase 3 — RESHAPE

- 1. What do I want my relationship with my body to look like in six months?
- 2. What would I need to believe about myself for that to be possible?
- 3. One way I will protect the progress I've made even when life gets hard:

***Today's reflection:** I am not trying to get back to who I was. I am becoming someone I haven't been before.*

Day 18 — Releasing Perfectionism | Phase 3 — RESHAPE

- 1. Where did perfectionism show up during this reset — in the food, the movement, the practices?
- 2. What did I do imperfectly this week and did it actually matter?
- 3. The standard I am choosing to hold myself to from now on — not perfect, but:

***Today's reflection:** Consistency beats perfection every time. Showing up imperfectly is still showing up.*

Day 19 — The Women Who Came Before | Phase 3 — RESHAPE

- 1. Think of the women in your family — mothers, grandmothers. What did they model about caring for their own bodies?
- 2. What pattern ends with me — a pattern of self-sacrifice, self-neglect, or silence about struggle?
- 3. What new pattern am I starting — for myself and for any women who come after me?

Today's reflection: The healing I do in my own body has a ripple effect beyond me. This work matters.

Day 20 — Almost There | Phase 3 — RESHAPE

- 1. Tomorrow is my last day of the 21-day reset. What do I want to feel by the end of it?
- 2. What am I most proud of from these three weeks?
- 3. One thing I want to say to my body that I've never said before:

Today's reflection: I am one day away from completing something most women never start. That is remarkable.

Day 21 — Your New Beginning | Phase 3 — RESHAPE

- 1. I have completed 21 days of the Calm Metabolism Reset. Write freely — how do I feel?
- 2. What is the most important thing that has shifted — in my body, my mindset, or my relationship with myself?
- 3. My commitment to myself going forward:

Today's reflection: This is not the end. This is the starting line. And I now know I can show up for myself.

SECTION 2 — BREATH-WORK CARDS

Print, cut out and keep on your bedside table

Breath-work is not a wellness trend. It is your fastest direct access to your nervous system — bypassing the thinking mind entirely and speaking directly to the body. Each technique below works differently. Try them all across the 21 days and find the ones that work best for you.

BOX BREATHING — THE FOUNDATION

5-10 mins | Every morning before phone | Before meals | Before bed

Step 1: Sit or lie comfortably. Close your eyes or soften your gaze.

Step 2: Inhale slowly through your nose for 4 counts.

Step 3: Hold your breath for 4 counts.

Step 4: Exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 counts.

Step 5: Hold empty for 4 counts.

Step 6: Repeat 8-10 cycles without rushing.

Why this works: Box breathing directly activates your parasympathetic nervous system — your rest and digest state — and begins lowering cortisol within minutes. This is the practice that underpins everything else in this reset.

EXTENDED EXHALE — EMERGENCY CALM

2-3 mins | Any moment of stress, anxiety or overwhelm

Step 1: Inhale through the nose for 4 counts.

Step 2: Exhale through the mouth for 8 counts — twice as long as the inhale.

Step 3: Do not hold the breath. Just breathe in, and breathe out slowly.

Step 4: Repeat for 2-3 minutes or until calm returns.

Why this works: The extended exhale activates the vagus nerve — your primary parasympathetic nerve — and overrides the fight-or-flight response faster than any other technique. Use this whenever cortisol spikes.

PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGH — FASTEST RESET

30 secs | Throughout the day | After an intense moment | Mid-afternoon slump

Step 1: Take a full inhale through the nose.

Step 2: At the top of the inhale, sniff in a second short sharp breath through the nose — topping up your lungs.

Step 3: Then exhale slowly and completely through the mouth.

Step 4: Repeat 2–3 times.

Why this works: The physiological sigh is the fastest known way to lower heart rate and activate calm. It is the same mechanism your body uses naturally when you sigh with relief. You are simply doing it intentionally.

4-7-8 BREATHING — SLEEP INDUCTION

4–5 mins | In bed | When mind is racing | Night wakings

Step 1: Place the tip of your tongue on the ridge of tissue behind your upper front teeth.

Step 2: Inhale quietly through your nose for 4 counts.

Step 3: Hold your breath for 7 counts.

Step 4: Exhale completely through your mouth for 8 counts.

Step 5: This is one cycle. Complete 4 cycles to begin — building to 8.

Why this works: The 4-7-8 pattern is one of the most powerful tools for sleep onset. The extended hold and exhale deeply activate the parasympathetic system and prepare the brain for slow-wave sleep — the deep restorative phase that repairs and rebuilds.

BELLY BREATHING — CORTISOL RESET

5 mins | Morning regulation practice | After exercise | Chronic stress relief

Step 1: Lie on your back or sit comfortably. Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly.

Step 2: Breathe in slowly through your nose — your belly should rise while your chest stays relatively still.

Step 3: Breathe out slowly through your nose or mouth.

Step 4: Focus on the rise and fall of your belly for the full 5 minutes.

Step 5: If your chest keeps rising, gently press your lower hand down and breathe into it.

Why this works: Most stressed women breathe shallow chest breaths, keeping the body in a low-grade stress state all day. Belly breathing is the body's natural rest state and directly lowers cortisol by activating the lower lobes of the lungs where the parasympathetic nerve endings are densest.

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING — BALANCE

5 mins | Feeling overwhelmed | Before important decisions | Mid-day reset

Step 1: Sit comfortably. Rest your left hand on your left knee.

Step 2: With your right hand, place your index and middle finger on your forehead. Use your thumb to close your right nostril.

Step 3: Inhale slowly through the left nostril.

Step 4: Close the left nostril with your ring finger. Open the right nostril. Exhale through the right.

Step 5: Inhale through the right nostril. Close right. Open left. Exhale left.

Step 6: This is one cycle. Continue for 5 minutes.

Why this works: Alternate nostril breathing balances the two hemispheres of the brain and has been shown to significantly reduce anxiety and cortisol levels within minutes. It feels unusual at first and becomes deeply calming with practice.

SECTION 3 — SOMATIC PRACTICE GUIDE

Your body stores what your mind cannot process. These practices release it.

Somatic practices are body-based approaches to healing the nervous system. Unlike talk therapy or mental reframing, somatic work bypasses the thinking mind and speaks directly to the body — releasing the physical imprint of stress, trauma and survival patterns stored in your muscles, fascia and tissues.

These seven practices are drawn from established somatic therapy, TRE (Trauma Release Exercises) and nervous system regulation research. Use them as needed — especially on high-stress days, after emotional events, or whenever you notice tension your mind cannot seem to release.

THE SHAKE — TRAUMA RELEASE

5-10 MINUTES | High stress days | After emotional events | Daily in Phase 1

Step 1: Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees slightly soft.

Step 2: Begin bouncing gently on your knees — allowing your heels to lift slightly.

Step 3: Let the vibration travel up through your legs, hips, belly and chest.

Step 4: Allow your arms to shake. Allow your jaw to release. Allow your whole body to tremble if it wants to.

Step 5: Do not control or suppress the movement. Let it happen.

Step 6: After 5 minutes, slow the bouncing and stand still. Notice what you feel.

Why this works: Animals naturally shake after a stressful event to discharge the adrenaline and cortisol that flooded their systems during threat. Humans have learned to suppress this response — which means the stress hormones stay in the body. This practice deliberately induces the natural discharge response.

HIP CIRCLES — RELEASING STORED EMOTION

3-5 MINUTES | Morning movement | After sitting for long periods | Emotional tension

Step 1: Stand with feet hip-width apart. Place hands on hips.

Step 2: Begin drawing slow, large circles with your hips — as though stirring a large pot.

Step 3: Move in one direction for 10 circles, then reverse.

Step 4: Allow the movement to be imperfect and exploratory. Notice any resistance or tightness.

Step 5: Breathe slowly throughout — exhaling fully on each circle.

Why this works: The hips and pelvis are where the body tends to store unprocessed emotional material — particularly grief, rage and fear. This is why so many people cry or feel suddenly emotional during hip-opening yoga poses. Gentle circular movement begins to release this stored tension safely.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELEASE — FULL BODY RESET

10–15 MINUTES | Before bed | After a difficult day | Whenever body feels tense

Step 1: Lie on your back in a comfortable position.

Step 2: Starting with your feet — squeeze all the muscles as tightly as you can for 5 counts. Then release completely.

Step 3: Move to your calves — tense for 5 counts, release.

Step 4: Continue up the body: thighs, glutes, belly, hands and forearms, upper arms, shoulders, face.

Step 5: After completing the full sequence, lie still for 2 minutes. Notice the heaviness and warmth.

Why this works: Progressive muscle relaxation teaches the body that it is capable of moving between tension and complete release — something many chronically stressed women have forgotten how to do. The contrast between tense and relaxed activates the parasympathetic response and rapidly lowers cortisol.

LEGS UP THE WALL — DRAINAGE AND CALM

10–15 MINUTES | After any movement session | Evening wind-down | Period of high stress

Step 1: Sit sideways next to a wall. Swing your legs up the wall as you lie back.

Step 2: Position your hips as close to the wall as comfortable. Arms relaxed by your sides, palms facing up.

Step 3: Close your eyes. Breathe naturally.

Step 4: If your hamstrings are tight, move slightly away from the wall — you should feel a stretch, not strain.

Step 5: Stay for 10–15 minutes. Simply rest.

Why this works: Inverting the legs reverses the flow of blood and lymph from the lower body, drains lactic acid from tired muscles, and activates the parasympathetic nervous system almost immediately. This pose is used therapeutically for adrenal recovery, insomnia, anxiety and hormonal dysregulation.

THE BODY SCAN — COMPASSIONATE AWARENESS

5–10 MINUTES | Morning | Evening | Whenever disconnected from body

Step 1: Lie on your back or sit comfortably. Close your eyes.

Step 2: Starting at the crown of your head, slowly move your attention down through your body.

Step 3: Notice — without trying to change — what you feel. Warmth, tightness, tingling, numbness, pain.

Step 4: When you encounter tension, simply breathe into that area. You are not trying to fix it. Just notice.

Step 5: Complete the scan all the way to the soles of your feet.

Step 6: Rest in awareness of your whole body for one minute before opening your eyes.

Why this works: Many women in chronic stress have learned to disconnect from their bodies entirely. The body scan rebuilds interoception — the ability to sense and interpret what the body is communicating — which is the foundation of nervous system regulation.

JAW AND FACE RELEASE — STRESS STORAGE

3-5 MINUTES | Whenever noticing jaw tension | Before bed | After difficult conversations

Step 1: Sit or lie comfortably. Close your eyes.

Step 2: Notice your jaw. Is it clenched? Where exactly is the tension?

Step 3: Open your mouth as wide as comfortable. Hold for 3 counts. Release.

Step 4: Move your jaw in slow circles — left, then right.

Step 5: Massage the muscles just in front of your ears with your fingertips.

Step 6: Place your tongue flat on the roof of your mouth and hold for 30 seconds. Release.

Step 7: Finish by allowing your face to completely soften — mouth slightly open, eyes gentle.

Why this works: The jaw is one of the primary storage sites for unprocessed stress. Chronic jaw clenching is directly linked to elevated cortisol and disrupted sleep. Releasing jaw tension signals safety to the amygdala — the brain's threat-detection centre — and lowers the overall stress response.

GROUNDING — COMING BACK TO THE PRESENT

3-5 MINUTES | Anxiety | Dissociation | Overwhelm | Panic | Feeling unsafe

Step 1: Stand barefoot on the ground if possible (grass, soil or a hard floor).

Step 2: Press your feet firmly into the ground. Feel the surface beneath you.

Step 3: Name 5 things you can see. Say them aloud if possible.

Step 4: Name 4 things you can physically feel (the floor, the air temperature, your clothing, your breath).

Step 5: Name 3 things you can hear.

Step 6: Name 2 things you can smell.

Step 7: Name 1 thing you can taste.

Step 8: Take three slow deep breaths. Return to the present moment.

Why this works: Grounding interrupts the fight-or-flight response by redirecting the brain's attention from perceived threat to immediate sensory reality. It is one of the most evidence-based interventions for anxiety, trauma response and panic — and it works within minutes.

SECTION 4 — THE SLEEP PROTOCOL

Sleep is not rest. Sleep is repair. Treat it accordingly.

Sleep is the single most important physiological intervention available to a woman in menopause. During deep sleep, your body produces growth hormone (which preserves muscle and burns fat), repairs cellular damage, processes emotional experience, clears inflammatory markers, and resets cortisol for the following day. When sleep is disrupted — as it almost always is in perimenopause and menopause — every other aspect of your health is compromised.

This is not a rigid schedule. It is a sequence of signals you send your nervous system each evening to prepare your body for genuine repair.

Your Evening Wind-Down Sequence

TIME BEFORE BED	PRACTICE	WHY IT MATTERS
2 hours before	Finish eating for the evening	Your body temperature needs to drop to initiate deep sleep. Active digestion raises core temperature and delays sleep onset.
90 minutes before	Dim all lights in your home	Bright light suppresses melatonin production — your primary sleep hormone. Dimming lights signals to the brain that night is approaching. Consider Blue-Blocker glasses.
60 minutes before	No screens — phone, television, computer	Blue light from screens directly suppresses melatonin and raises cortisol. One hour is the minimum. Two hours is ideal.
60 minutes before	Magnesium glycinate — 300–400mg	Magnesium is one of the most effective natural sleep aids, particularly for women in menopause. It relaxes muscles, calms the nervous system and supports deep sleep architecture.
45 minutes before	Warm shower or bath	A warm shower raises your surface temperature — and the subsequent cooling when you get out triggers the temperature drop your body needs for sleep onset.
30 minutes before	Evening journalling — 5 minute prompt	Processing the day on paper prevents your mind from processing it while you are trying to sleep. It also activates the prefrontal cortex (calm, reasoning mind) rather than the amygdala (threat, anxiety).
15 minutes before	Legs Up The Wall — 10 minutes	Drains lactic acid, lowers cortisol, activates the parasympathetic nervous system. The best pre-sleep somatic practice available.

In bed	4-7-8 Breathing until asleep	See breath-work cards. If you wake in the night, use the same technique to return to sleep without turning on lights or picking up your phone.
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Your Sleep Environment Checklist

ELEMENT	TARGET	WHY
Temperature	18–20°C / 64–68°F	Core body temperature must drop by 1–2 degrees for sleep onset. Most bedrooms are too warm.
Darkness	Complete blackout if possible	Even small amounts of light through closed eyelids suppress melatonin. Use blackout curtains or a sleep mask.
Sound	Silent or consistent white noise	Sudden sounds disrupt the transition between sleep stages. A fan, white noise machine or earplugs can help.
Phone	Out of the bedroom or on Do Not Disturb	The proximity of a phone — even face-down — is enough to disrupt the nervous system's ability to fully rest.
Bedding	Natural fibres where possible	Synthetic fabrics trap heat and can worsen hot flushes. Cotton, bamboo or linen allow the body to regulate temperature.
Lavender	A few drops on your pillow	Lavender has been shown in multiple studies to reduce anxiety, lower heart rate and improve sleep quality.

When You Wake In The Night

Night waking is common in menopause — driven by fluctuating oestrogen, temperature dysregulation and cortisol patterns. Here is the protocol:

- **Do NOT:** Turn on lights, check your phone, check the time, get up and eat, scroll social media
- **Do:** Stay lying down. Use 4-7-8 breathing immediately.
- **Do:** Place your hands on your chest or belly and breathe slowly — the physical weight of your hands is grounding.
- **Do:** If you cannot return to sleep within 20 minutes, get up briefly, do legs up the wall for 10 minutes in dim light, then return to bed.
- **Consider:** Magnesium glycinate before bed if you are not already using it. Also consider a small protein snack (Greek yoghurt, handful of nuts) if hunger is waking you.

SECTION 5 — UNDERSTANDING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Read once. Refer to often. This is the foundation of everything.

Why Your Body Has Been In Survival Mode

Your nervous system has one primary job: to keep you alive. It does this by constantly scanning for threat — and when it perceives one, it mobilises your body's resources to respond. This is the fight-or-flight response, and it is a brilliant survival mechanism.

The problem is that your nervous system cannot distinguish between a life-threatening emergency and chronic emotional stress. A difficult childhood. Years of overwork. An abusive relationship. Grief. Financial pressure. Decades of pushing past your limits. To your nervous system, all of these register as ongoing threat.

When this state becomes chronic — which it does for many high-achieving, high-stress women — your body begins to pay a very specific physiological price:

WHAT HAPPENS	WHY IT HAPPENS	WHAT YOU EXPERIENCE
Cortisol stays elevated	Your body is preparing for sustained threat	Weight gain around the belly, poor sleep, anxiety, food cravings
Metabolism slows	Your body conserves energy for survival	Difficulty losing weight despite diet and exercise
Digestion is suppressed	Non-essential systems shut down during threat	Bloating, IBS, gut inflammation, food sensitivities
Inflammation rises	Immune system is primed for physical threat	Joint pain, brain fog, skin issues, worsened menopause symptoms
Oestrogen dysregulates	Cortisol competes with sex hormones for resources	Hot flashes, mood swings, irregular cycles, accelerated menopause
Sleep is disrupted	Survival mode keeps the brain vigilant at night	Waking at 3am, difficulty falling asleep, unrefreshing sleep
Muscle breaks down	Body cannibalises muscle for emergency energy	Loss of muscle tone, slower metabolism, increased fat storage

The Window of Tolerance

The Window of Tolerance is a concept from trauma therapy that describes the zone in which your nervous system can function optimally — calm enough to think clearly, engaged enough to act effectively, regulated enough to feel emotions without being overwhelmed by them.

When you are inside your window, you can learn, connect, make decisions, feel joy, tolerate discomfort and respond rather than react. When you are outside your window — either too activated (anxiety, panic, rage) or too shut down (numbness, exhaustion, dissociation) — none of this is possible.

Crucially: no amount of willpower, discipline or dieting works when you are outside your window.

The entire 21-Day Calm Metabolism Reset is designed to widen your window and keep you within it. Phase 1 brings you back into your window. Phase 2 works from inside it. Phase 3 expands it.

Signs Your Nervous System Is Regulating

These are the signals to watch for — evidence that the work you are doing is having an effect:

- You wake up without immediately feeling dread or exhaustion
- Small things that used to trigger strong reactions feel more manageable
- You feel hunger and fullness signals more clearly
- Your sleep is deeper and more restorative
- You notice moments of genuine calm — not just the absence of crisis
- You can tolerate discomfort (physical or emotional) without needing to immediately escape it
- Your digestion is settling
- You feel present in your body rather than observing it from a distance
- You can receive good news without waiting for the other shoe to drop
- You feel something resembling hope

You may not experience all of these. You may experience only one or two at first. That is enough. That is your nervous system beginning to exhale. Trust it.

The inner work is the work.

Everything else — the food, the movement, the supplements — works because of this. Use this toolkit. Come back to it. Let it be the part of this reset that surprises you most.