



Nervous System Regulation Cards

32 CARDS

HOW TO USE THESE CARDS:

- **Customize Your Deck:** Choose 3–5 cards that support your most common regulation needs (e.g., overwhelm, shutdown, overstimulation).
- **Pair Techniques:** Combine a body-based reset (🧊) + a cognitive cue (💡) for layered regulation (e.g., cold stimulus + grounding phrase).
- **Practice Proactively:** Use one card daily during calm moments to strengthen your nervous system's ability to regulate under stress.

FINAL NOTE

*Your nervous system is not the enemy – it is trying to protect you.
These tools help you return to safety gently, at your own pace.
Small, consistent practices create powerful change.*

BREATHWORK
FOR
REGULATION

BOX BREATHING

Breathe like a Navy SEAL.



DO THIS:

Inhale 4 sec → Hold 4 sec → Exhale 4 sec → Hold 4 sec.
Repeat 5x.



SCIENCE:

Calms the nervous system by slowing breath + regulating vagal activity..



TIP:

Trace a square with your finger to sync breath + movement.

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

Balance your nervous system.



DO THIS:

Close right nostril, inhale through left for 4 sec. Switch. Close left, exhale through right. Repeat 5x.



SCIENCE:

Balances the nervous system by slowing breath + supporting vagal regulation.



TIP:

Use your non-dominant hand to enhance focus on the switch.

COUNTING BREATH

Calm the racing mind.



DO THIS:

Breathe in for 4 counts. Breathe out for 6 counts. Repeat 10 times.



SCIENCE:

Longer exhale than inhale activates parasympathetic nervous system.



TIP:

Count on your fingers to stay focused.

STRAW BREATHING

Slow the racing heart.



DO THIS:

Breathe in normally. Exhale slowly through pursed lips (like a straw). Repeat 8-10 times.



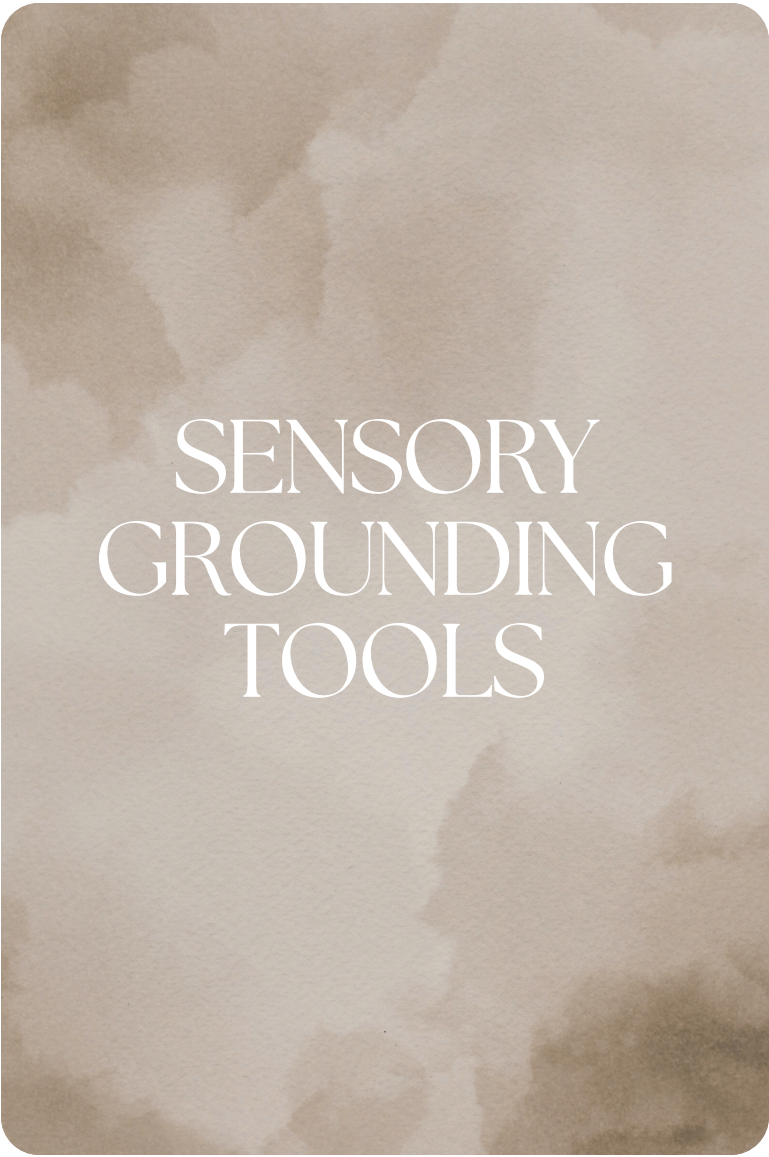
SCIENCE:

Extended exhale activates parasympathetic response, lowering heart rate.



TIP:

Make the exhale twice as long as the inhale.



SENSORY GROUNDING TOOLS

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

Return to the here and now.



DO THIS:

Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.



SCIENCE:

Forces the prefrontal cortex to re-engage by focusing on sensory input.



TIP:

Carry a strong mint (taste anchor) for faster grounding.

TIPP TEMPERATURE SHOCK

Cool the emotional fire.



DO THIS:

Splash cold water on your face or hold an ice pack to your chest for 30 seconds.



SCIENCE:

Triggers the mammalian dive reflex, slowing heart rate instantly.



TIP:

Keep a mini ice pack in your bag for emergencies.

WEIGHTED BLANKET BURRITO

Deep pressure for instant calm.



DO THIS:

Wrap yourself tightly in a weighted blanket for 10 minutes.



SCIENCE:

Deep pressure stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system (rest-and-digest).



TIP:

Pair with a guided meditation for doubled soothing effects.

Hack your senses with scent.



DO THIS:

Inhale a calming scent (lavender, peppermint) deeply 3 times.



SCIENCE:

Smell bypasses the thalamus, directly calming the limbic system.



TIP:

Carry a portable essential oil roller in your bag or pocket.

SOUR CANDY DISTRACTION

Shock your senses awake.



DO THIS:

Suck on a sour candy or bite a lemon wedge. Focus on the tang.



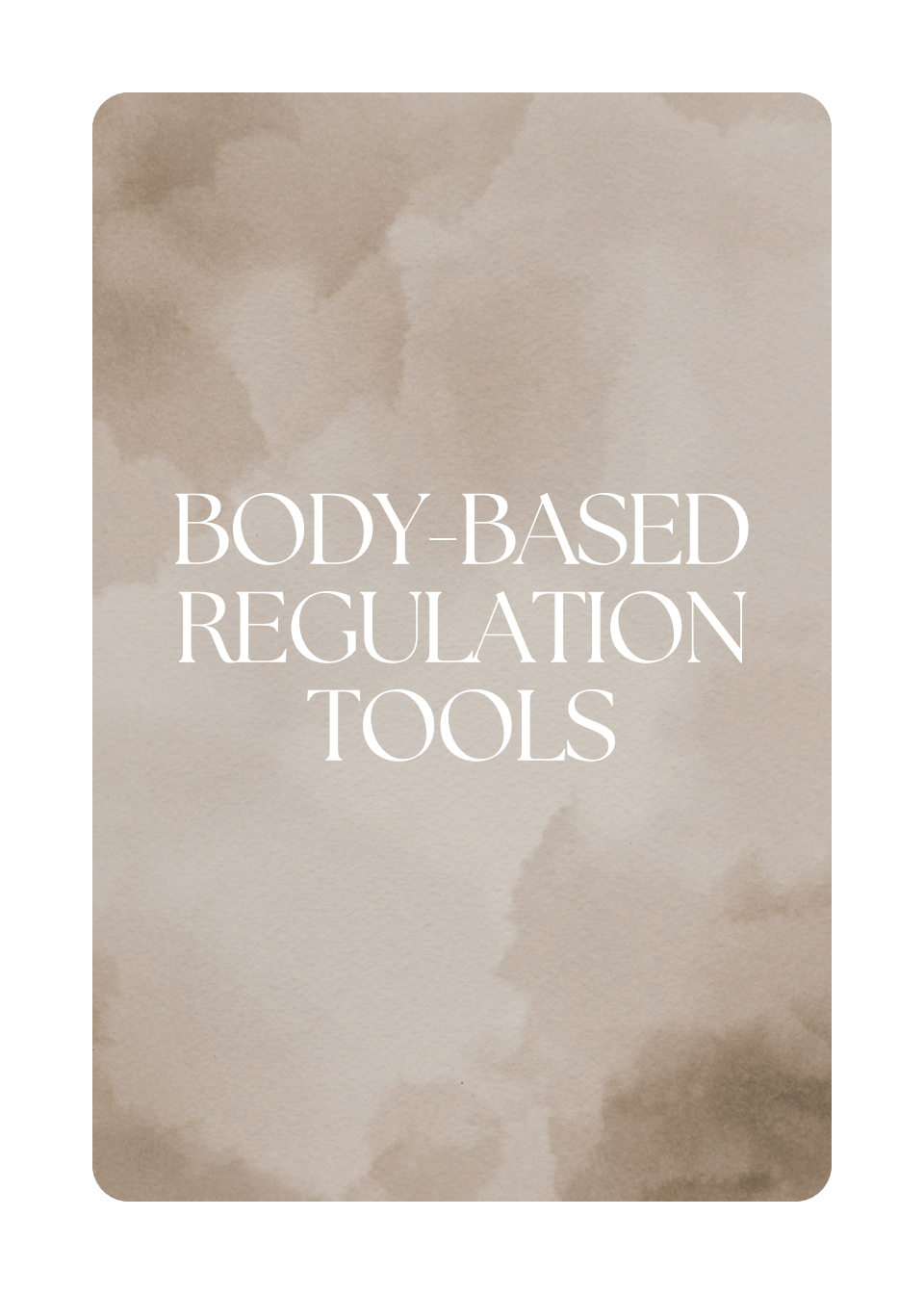
SCIENCE:

Intense taste overrides emotional overwhelm by hijacking sensory pathways.



TIP:

Keep Warheads or sour mints in your glovebox/desk.



BODY-BASED REGULATION TOOLS

SHAKE IT OUT

Let the body do its thing.



DO THIS:

Shake hands vigorously, then arms, then whole body for 1-2 minutes. Pause and breathe.



SCIENCE:

Mimics how animals discharge stress after threats, completing the stress cycle.



TIP:

Put on music and make it fun!

CROSS CRAWL

Rewire left and right brain.



DO THIS:

March in place. Touch right hand to left knee, left hand to right knee. Continue 1-2 minutes.



SCIENCE:

Crosses midline of body, integrating both brain hemispheres.



TIP:

Go slow and exaggerate movements for a better effect.

BUTTERFLY HUG

Self-soothe like a pro.



DO THIS:

Cross arms over chest. Tap alternating shoulders slowly for 30 seconds.



SCIENCE:

Bilateral stimulation calms the nervous system and creates safety.



TIP:

Add a gentle rocking motion for extra comfort.

WALL PUSH

Push back
against
powerlessness.



DO THIS:

Stand facing wall. Push hard with hands for 10 seconds. Rest.
Repeat 3 times.



SCIENCE:

Engages muscles in 'fight' response, releasing stuck activation.



TIP:

Grunt or make noise while pushing for extra release.

BODY SCAN

Check in from head to toe.



DO THIS:

Start at top of head. Notice sensations without judgment.
Move attention slowly downward to toes.



SCIENCE:

Increases interoception (body awareness), reducing dissociation.



TIP:

Do lying down for maximum relaxation.

JAW RELEASE



Let go of stored tension.



DO THIS:

Open mouth wide. Move jaw side to side, then circles. Let jaw hang loose.



SCIENCE:

Jaw holds trauma and stress; releasing it signals safety to the brain.



TIP:

Massage temples while releasing jaw.

PENDULATION

Ride the wave between comfort and discomfort.



DO THIS:

Notice uncomfortable sensation. Shift attention to comfortable area. Move back and forth gently.



SCIENCE:

Builds capacity to tolerate distress by alternating between safety and activation.



TIP:

Go slowly—rushing defeats the purpose.

COGNITIVE +
EMOTIONAL
REGULATION
TOOLS

NAME IT TO TAME IT

Label the emotion to drain its power.



DO THIS:

Say aloud: "I'm feeling [anger/panic/joy]." Write it down if possible.



SCIENCE:

Labeling emotions reduces amygdala activity and engages the prefrontal cortex.



TIP:

Keep a "Feeling Words" list in your phone for quick reference.

THE 90-SECOND SURGE



Wait it out.
Emotions
pass.



DO THIS:

Set a timer for 90 seconds. Breathe deeply; remind yourself:
“This will fade.”



SCIENCE:

Emotional chemical surges
last ~90 seconds unless
“refueled” by thoughts.



TIP:

Write “90” on your wrist as a
visual cue.

GRATITUDE FLASH

Flood your brain with the good stuff.



DO THIS:

Rapid-fire list 3 tiny wins (e.g., “I drank water,” “My plant is alive”).



SCIENCE:

Gratitude triggers dopamine release, countering negativity bias.



TIP:

Save a “Wins” folder in your phone notes for tough moments.

ALPHABET GAME

Distract your brain with A–Z.



DO THIS:

Name items alphabetically in a category (e.g., “Animals: Aardvark, Bear...”).



SCIENCE:

Forces the prefrontal cortex to organize information, overriding emotional loops.



TIP:

Use silly categories like “Types of Pizza” to lighten the mood.

PHONE A FRIEND

Reality-check with your person.



DO THIS:

Call/text a pre-selected “vent buddy” and say: “I need a reality check.”



SCIENCE:

Social connection lowers cortisol and boosts oxytocin (bonding hormone).



TIP:

Agree on a code word with your buddy for urgent moments (e.g., “Code Red”).

SCRIPTED TIME-OUT

Pause a conflict without guilt.



DO THIS:

Say, "I care about this, but I need 10 minutes to think clearly."



SCIENCE:

Prevents amygdala hijacking during heated conversations.



TIP:

Agree on a "time-out" hand signal with loved ones.

SAFETY +
CONNECTION
CUES

ORIENTING

Find safety in the room.



DO THIS:

Look slowly around the room. Notice colors, shapes, textures.
Move your head gently.



SCIENCE:

Helps nervous system assess environment as safe, reducing threat response.



TIP:

Name objects out loud to strengthen grounding.

PRESSURE POINT RESET

Press pause on panic.



DO THIS:

Press your thumb firmly into the palm of the opposite hand for 10 seconds.



SCIENCE:

Activates parasympathetic nervous system via acupressure points.



TIP:

Pair with a mantra like, "I am safe."

THE 5-MINUTE SPRINT

Move the emotion through you.



DO THIS:

Run in place, dance, or jump rope for 5 minutes.



SCIENCE:

Burns off stress hormones (adrenaline/cortisol) stuck in the body.



TIP:

Pair with angry music for catharsis.

FIDGET CHAIN

Distract your hands, quiet your mind.



DO THIS:

Cycle through 3 fidget tools (e.g., spinner → stress ball → textured bracelet).



SCIENCE:

Tactile stimulation redirects focus from emotional arousal to motor control.



TIP:

Assign a specific fidget to each overwhelming emotion (e.g., putty for anger).

MANTRA LOOP

Rewrite the script in your head.



DO THIS:

Repeat: "I am safe. I am in control. This will pass." (Or customize your own.)



SCIENCE:

Mantras disrupt repetitive negative thoughts by creating new neural pathways.



TIP:

Write your mantra on a sticky note or wristband for visual reinforcement.

VOO SOUND

Unfreeze your system.



DO THIS:

Breathe in deeply. Say 'voo' on a long exhale. Feel vibration in body. Repeat 5-10 times.



SCIENCE:

Low-frequency vibrations activate the ventral vagal system, releasing freeze.



TIP:

Longer exhales = stronger effect.

SHOULDER ROLLS

Release what you're carrying.



DO THIS:

Roll shoulders backward 10 times slowly. Then forward 10 times. Pause and notice.



SCIENCE:

Releases tension in trapezius muscles where stress accumulates.



TIP:

Add deep breaths with each roll.

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SOLES OF FEET

Ground down into the earth.



DO THIS:

Focus on feet touching floor. Notice temperature, pressure.
Wiggle toes slowly.



SCIENCE:

Redirects attention from
emotional overwhelm to
physical sensation.



TIP:

Stand barefoot for stronger
connection.

BILATERAL TAPPING

Left. Right. Calm.



DO THIS:

Tap your left knee, then right knee, alternating for 1 minute.



SCIENCE:

Mimics EMDR therapy,
reducing amygdala
hyperactivity.



TIP:

Hum a tune while tapping to
double the distraction.

Thank You

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YOUR PROMO GOES HERE

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