



NERVOUS SYSTEM REGULATION SELF- ASSESSMENT

Understand why your body may feel stuck in stress mode and what can help restore balance.

A free guide by
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Many people experience symptoms such as fatigue, anxiety, poor sleep or persistent tension, and assume this is simply the result of stress.

In reality, the nervous system is constantly responding to signals from the body.

Factors such as blood sugar stability, breathing patterns, nutrient status, sleep and physical tension all influence how safe and regulated the nervous system feels.

When several of these systems are under strain, the nervous system may remain in a heightened state of alert.

Understanding these physiological drivers is the first step toward restoring balance.

The Five Drivers of Nervous System Regulation

In clinical practice, I often assess five key physiological systems that influence how regulated or overloaded the nervous system feels.



Breathing patterns

Influence carbon dioxide balance and nervous system signalling



Metabolic stability

Blood sugar fluctuations can trigger stress hormones and affect energy, mood and resilience



Nutrient status

Key nutrients support energy production and neurotransmitter balance



Pain and muscular tension

Persistent pain or tension can keep the nervous system in a protective, reactive state



Lifestyle load

Sleep, activity levels and daily stress all influence recovery capacity

Signs Your Nervous System May Be Under Strain

When the nervous system is under sustained physiological load, people often notice a combination of physical and emotional symptoms.

You may recognise some of the following.



Energy

- Feeling tired even after sleeping
- Energy crashes during the day
- Reliance on caffeine or sugar to keep going



Sleep

- Difficulty switching off at night
- Waking during the night
- Light or unrefreshing sleep



Body

- Persistent muscular tension
- Headaches or neck and shoulder pain
- Digestive discomfort



Mental state

- Feeling wired or restless
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling easily overwhelmed

If several of these feel familiar, it may indicate that your nervous system is carrying a higher physiological load.

The next page offers a short self-assessment to help you explore this further.

Nervous System Self-Assessment

On the next page, you will find a set of questions. For each statement, rate how often it applies to you:

0 = rarely

1 = sometimes

2 = often

3 = very often

Try to answer based on your general experience over the past few weeks.

Nervous System Self-Assessment

0 = rarely 1 = sometimes 2 = often 3 = very often

Breathing	Score
My breathing often feels shallow or restricted	
I tend to breathe through my mouth, especially during sleep or exercise	
I feel breathless or tense during stress or concentration	
Metabolic stability	Score
My energy drops significantly between meals	
I rely on caffeine or sugary foods to maintain energy	
I feel shaky, irritable or lightheaded when hungry	
Nutrient status / energy	Score
I feel tired even after a full night's sleep	
My energy fluctuates significantly throughout the day	
I feel mentally foggy or slow at times	
Pain and physical tension	Score
I experience frequent neck, shoulder or jaw tension	
I have recurring headaches or muscular pain	
My body often feels tight or uncomfortable	
Lifestyle load	Score
I feel mentally overwhelmed by daily responsibilities	
I struggle to switch off at the end of the day	
My sleep is light, disrupted or unrefreshing	
Total score	

Understanding Your Score

This score is not about perfection. It is simply a way of identifying the areas where your nervous system may be receiving repeated signals of stress or imbalance.

Score bands

0–10 Your nervous system may currently be under relatively low physiological load.

11–20 Your nervous system may be experiencing moderate physiological stress.

21–30 Your nervous system may be under sustained physiological pressure.

31–45 Your nervous system may currently be under significant load and may benefit from more targeted support.

This self-assessment is not a medical diagnosis, but a tool to help identify areas where the body may benefit from support.

Higher scores often reflect a greater cumulative physiological load on the nervous system, rather than a single cause.

What your results may indicate

Your score is not a diagnosis, but it can offer insight into how your nervous system may currently be functioning.

Different patterns in your answers can point toward underlying physiological stressors.

0-10 - Lower physiological load

Your nervous system may currently be under relatively low physiological load.

This suggests your body is generally able to regulate between activity and rest.

If symptoms are still present, it may be worth exploring more specific areas such as:

- Nutrient status
- Hormonal balance
- Digestion
- Localised physical tension

11-20 - Moderate physiological stress

Your nervous system may be experiencing moderate physiological stress. You may notice:

- Periods of calm alongside stress
- Dips in energy
- Occasional sleep disruption
- Tension building over time

This often reflects early imbalances in areas such as:

- Blood sugar stability
- Breathing patterns
- Recovery and sleep quality

What your results may indicate

21-30 - Sustained physiological pressure

Your nervous system may be under sustained physiological pressure. At this stage, the body may find it harder to return fully to a relaxed state.

You may recognise this as:

- Feeling “tired but wired”
- Difficulty switching off
- Disrupted sleep
- Ongoing physical tension

Multiple factors may be contributing, including:

- Blood sugar fluctuations
- Shallow or inefficient breathing
- Cumulative stress load
- Insufficient recovery

31-45 - Significant physiological load

Your nervous system may currently be under significant load and may benefit from more targeted support.

The body may be spending prolonged periods in a heightened state of alert, which can impact:

- Sleep quality
- Energy levels
- Pain and muscle tension
- Emotional resilience

At this stage, it is often helpful to take a more structured and personalised approach to support.

Looking at your pattern of responses

As well as your total score, it can be helpful to notice if your answers are clustered around a particular area.

For example, you may find that most of your responses relate to:

- Sleep
- Energy
- Physical tension
- Stress reactivity

This can offer a useful indication of where your nervous system may be under the most strain and what to support first.

Simple Ways to Begin Supporting Your Nervous System

Small, consistent changes to these areas can begin to reduce the overall load on the nervous system.



Stabilise your energy

Start the day with a savoury breakfast containing protein and healthy fats to support steadier energy and reduce blood sugar dips.



Support your breathing

Take a few minutes each day to slow your breathing and focus on nasal breathing.



Create space for recovery

Even a short daily pause can help the nervous system shift toward a more restorative state.



Reduce physical tension

Gentle movement, stretching and acupuncture can help reduce nervous system load.



Support sleep and recovery

Aim for a consistent bedtime and reduce stimulation later in the evening where possible.


How I Support Nervous System Regulation in Practice

In my clinical practice, I combine acupuncture with naturopathic support to help address the physiological factors influencing nervous system regulation.

Acupuncture can help regulate nervous system signalling and support the body's shift toward a more restorative state.

Alongside this, naturopathic approaches focus on supporting the physiological foundations that influence nervous system balance, including nutrition, metabolic stability, breathing patterns, sleep and physical tension.



 You're welcome to get in touch if you'd like support understanding what may be contributing to your symptoms in more detail.

