A LOW-FRICTION NERVOUS SYSTEM RESET

The 7-Day Self-Regulation Workbook

Simple, evidence-based tools to calm your nervous system — 5 to 10 minutes a day

7 Days • 5–10 Minutes a Day • No Equipment Needed

Welcome

You don't need an hour of free time or a perfectly quiet room to take care of your nervous system — you need a few honest minutes and a plan you'll actually follow. This workbook was built for that. Each day offers one small, research-informed practice you can do in five to ten minutes, wherever you are. There's nothing to master and nothing to get wrong. You're simply giving your body and mind a brief, reliable signal that it's safe to settle.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR 7 DAYS

1. **Same time, low bar.**
   Attach today's practice to something you already do — after coffee, before a meeting, in the car before you go inside. Consistency matters far more than duration.

2. **Skip the scorecard.**
   Some days the exercise will land, some days it won't do much — both are fine and both still count. This is practice, not performance.

3. **Write it down anyway.**
   Even a few rushed words in the reflection boxes help your brain notice patterns over the week. You can always come back and add more later.

BEFORE YOU START

This workbook offers general wellness practices and is not a substitute for therapy or medical care. If you're in crisis or feel unsafe, please reach out to a crisis line or mental health professional in your area.

DAY 1 OF 7

5–10 MINUTES

Physical Grounding & Orienting

1 THE DAILY MICRO-FOCUS

1 MIN READ

When you're stressed, your nervous system narrows its attention to the threat and loses track of the actual, present environment. Deliberately looking around and naming what's really here — sights, sounds, textures — sends your brain a clear signal of safety, which is often enough to begin easing the fight-or-flight response.

2 THE 3-MINUTE PRACTICE

3 MIN

The 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Scan

- [ ] Pause where you are and take one natural breath, without changing it.
- [ ] Name 5 things you can see. Let your eyes actually move around the room.
- [ ] Name 4 things you can hear, including sounds you'd normally tune out.
- [ ] Name 3 things you can physically feel — feet on the floor, fabric on skin, chair against your back.
- [ ] Name 2 things you can smell, or would if you tried.
- [ ] Name 1 thing you can taste, or take one slow sip of water.

3 THE 2-MINUTE REFLECTION

2 MIN

What did you notice in your body as you moved through the scan?

Where in your day could this 5-4-3-2-1 scan be most useful this week?

YOUR DAILY ANCHOR

“I am here, and here is safe enough for this moment.”

DAY 2 OF 7

5–10 MINUTES

Recalibrating the Breath

1 THE DAILY MICRO-FOCUS

1 MIN READ

Your exhale works like the body's built-in brake pedal. Longer, slower exhales activate the vagus nerve and nudge the nervous system out of alert mode and toward rest — often within just a few breaths, no special equipment or setting required.

2 THE 3-MINUTE PRACTICE

3 MIN

The Physiological Sigh

- [ ] Sit or stand comfortably and let your shoulders drop.
- [ ] Inhale through your nose, then stack a second, shorter sharp inhale on top of it.
- [ ] Exhale slowly and fully through your mouth — longer than the inhale felt.
- [ ] Repeat two more times, letting each exhale stretch out a little further.
- [ ] Pause and notice any shift in your jaw, shoulders, or chest.

3 THE 2-MINUTE REFLECTION

2 MIN

On a scale of 1–10, what was your tension level before and after this practice?

What time of day tends to leave your breath shallow or held?

YOUR DAILY ANCHOR

“A longer exhale is a signal of safety my body already understands.”

DAY 3 OF 7

5–10 MINUTES

Emotional Labeling & De-escalation

1 THE DAILY MICRO-FOCUS

1 MIN READ

Putting a word to what you feel activates the brain's language centers and quiets the amygdala's alarm response — a shift researchers call affect labeling. Naming an emotion doesn't make it disappear, but it often takes the edge off its intensity.

2 THE 3-MINUTE PRACTICE

3 MIN

Name It to Tame It

- [ ] Pause and ask yourself: "What am I actually feeling right now?"
- [ ] Name the emotion in one or two words — frustrated, anxious, flat, wired.
- [ ] Locate it in your body. Where do you physically feel it?
- [ ] Say, silently or out loud: "I notice I'm feeling ___."
- [ ] Take one slow breath and let the label sit, without rushing to fix it.

3 THE 2-MINUTE REFLECTION

2 MIN

What emotion showed up most for you today?

Was it easy or hard to find the right word? What got in the way?

YOUR DAILY ANCHOR

“I can name what I feel without becoming what I feel.”

DAY 4 OF 7

5–10 MINUTES

The 60-Second Cognitive Pause

1 THE DAILY MICRO-FOCUS

1 MIN READ

Automatic thoughts and urges move fast, but the impulse behind them typically peaks and fades within about 60 to 90 seconds if you don't act on it right away. A brief pause gives the reasoning part of your brain time to come back online before you react.

2 THE 3-MINUTE PRACTICE

3 MIN

The STOP Pause

- [ ] Stop what you're doing, mid-motion if you need to.
- [ ] Take one slow breath.
- [ ] Observe: what's the thought, urge, or story running right now?
- [ ] Ask: "Is this a fact, or a stress reaction?" before you proceed.

3 THE 2-MINUTE REFLECTION

2 MIN

What automatic thought or urge showed up for you today?

What changed after you gave it those 60 seconds?

YOUR DAILY ANCHOR

“I don't have to believe every urgent thought.”

DAY 5 OF 7

5–10 MINUTES

Somatic Release & Tension Check

1 THE DAILY MICRO-FOCUS

1 MIN READ

Stress often lodges in the shoulders, jaw, and gut long after the moment that triggered it has passed. A brief scan with intentional tension-and-release helps your body discharge that stored activation instead of carrying it into the rest of your day.

2 THE 3-MINUTE PRACTICE

3 MIN

Micro Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- [ ] Raise your shoulders to your ears, hold for 3 seconds, then release.
- [ ] Clench your jaw gently, hold for 3 seconds, release, and let it hang slightly open.
- [ ] Tighten your stomach, hold for 3 seconds, then release.
- [ ] Roll your shoulders back slowly, twice.
- [ ] Take one full breath and notice what's different.

3 THE 2-MINUTE REFLECTION

2 MIN

Where did you find the most tension today?

What might that area of your body be "holding" for you right now?

YOUR DAILY ANCHOR

“I can release what I no longer need to carry.”

DAY 6 OF 7

5–10 MINUTES

Self-Compassion & Noise Reduction

1 THE DAILY MICRO-FOCUS

1 MIN READ

A harsh inner voice keeps your stress response switched on, while a supportive one helps your nervous system settle. Self-compassion isn't indulgent — it's a regulation skill: treating yourself the way you'd treat someone you genuinely care about.

2 THE 3-MINUTE PRACTICE

3 MIN

The Friend Reframe

- [ ] Notice the critical thought running through your mind right now.
- [ ] Ask: "What would I say to a good friend in this exact situation?"
- [ ] Offer that same message to yourself, in your own words.
- [ ] Place a hand on your chest or arm as you say it.
- [ ] Let yourself take one full breath before you move on.

3 THE 2-MINUTE REFLECTION

2 MIN

What was your inner critic saying today?

What's a kinder, truer sentence you could offer yourself instead?

YOUR DAILY ANCHOR

“I can be honest with myself and still be kind.”

DAY 7 OF 7

5–10 MINUTES

Integration — Your Emergency Toolkit

1 THE DAILY MICRO-FOCUS

1 MIN READ

Regulation tools work best when you've already chosen them before you need them. A short, personal menu turns this week's practices into something fast and reliable you can reach for the next time stress catches you off guard.

2 THE 3-MINUTE PRACTICE

3 MIN

Build Your Self-Regulation Menu

- [ ] Flip back through this workbook, day by day.
- [ ] Notice which 2–3 practices felt most effective or doable for you.
- [ ] Write them into the menu below, in your own shorthand.
- [ ] Decide where you'll keep this page — a photo on your phone, taped inside a drawer.

3 THE 2-MINUTE REFLECTION

2 MIN

My go-to practices (write your top 2–3 below):

Where and how will you remind yourself to actually use this toolkit?

YOUR DAILY ANCHOR

“I already have what I need — I just have to reach for it.”

Integration & Moving Forward

Over the past seven days, you've practiced noticing your body, slowing your breath, naming your emotions, pausing before reacting, releasing physical tension, and speaking to yourself with more kindness. None of these tools require more than a few minutes or any equipment — which is exactly the point. Regulation doesn't have to be complicated to work. It has to be available, and now it is.

MY SELF-REGULATION COMMITMENT

In your own words, describe how and when you'll keep using these tools — be as specific as you can.

SIGNED

DATE

Come back to this page any time you need a reminder of what you already know how to do.