

Module 3:

Lesson 3.

Activating the Vagus Nerve



Why Activation Helps

Activating the vagus nerve supports:

- Stress reduction
- Emotional balance
- Improved digestion
- Clearer thinking
- Better sleep
- Higher resilience



Tool #1: Humming

Humming stimulates the vocal branches of the vagus nerve:

- Creates soothing vibration
- Slows exhalation
- Increases nitric oxide
- Helps the nervous system soften
- Sit upright or lie down
- Inhale through nose
- Exhale and humm with sealed lips
- Repeat for 3-5 min
- Explore different pitches



Tool # 2: Singing & Laughter



- Activates vocal cords
- Strengthens vagal motor function
- Helps regulate breath rhythm naturally
- Stimulates the diaphragm
- Sends rhythmic activation to the vagus nerve
- Fast, natural emotional reset



Tool # 2: Singing & Laughter



- Activates vocal cords
- Strengthens vagal motor function
- Helps regulate breath rhythm naturally
- Stimulates the diaphragm
- Sends rhythmic activation to the vagus nerve
- Fast, natural emotional reset



Tool # 3: Gargling



- Stimulates throat muscles
- Activates upper vagus nerve branches
- Best for morning or pre-meal activation



Tool # 4: Cold Exposure

- Cold water on the face or neck activates the “diving reflex”:
- Instant vagus nerve activation
- Rapid drop in heart rate
- Increased parasympathetic tone

Examples:

- Cold splash on face
- Cool shower at the end
- Cold pack on chest or neck
- Cold Plunge (a full lesson on this later)



Tool # 5: Diaphragmatic Breathing

Breathing with the diaphragm sends long, slow signals of safety:

- Gentle belly expansion
- Long exhale
- Smooth, quiet breath

Try: Inhale 3–4 seconds, exhale 6–8 seconds.



Tool #6: Gentle Movement



- Cat-cow
- Slow walking
- Gentle twisting
- Hip rocking
- Stretching the sides of the ribs

Tool #7: Massage

Areas that stimulate the vagus nerve:

- Sides of the neck
- Jaw and masseter
- Chest / sternum
- Diaphragm area

Belly massage (clockwise)

Feet (reflexive calming)



Tool #8 Heart Coherence

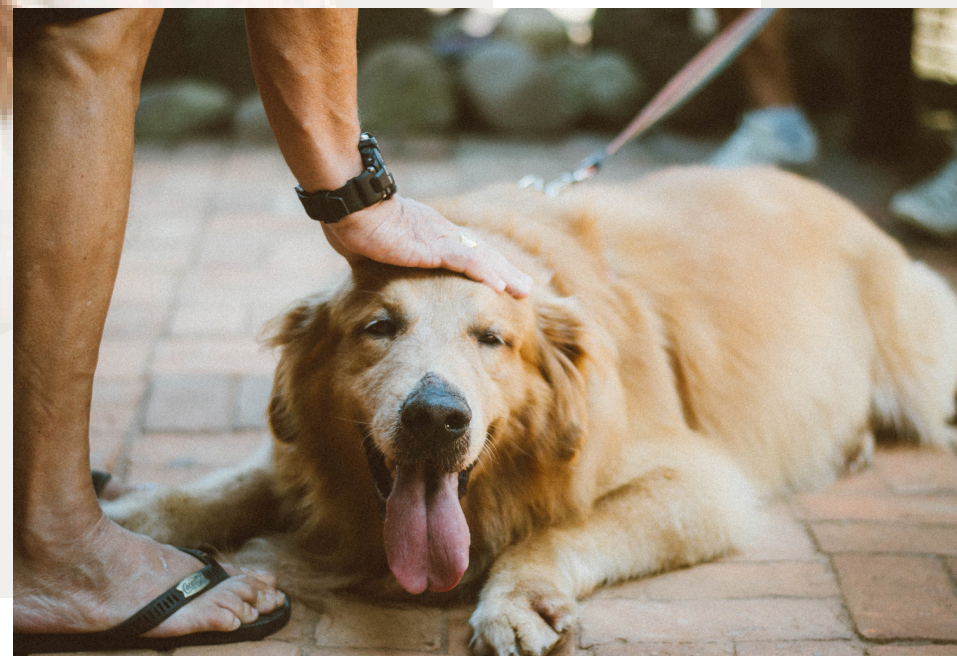


- Breathing + a feeling of calm (gratitude, compassion)
- Creates synchronization between breath, heart, and vagus nerve
- Enhances emotional stability and HRV

Tool # 9: Connection + Safety

Vagus nerve activation increases through:

- Eye contact
- Warm tone of voice
- Touch
- Feeling understood or supported
- Co-regulation with others (animals too)



Guided Humming Practice

- Sit upright or lie down
- Sense of length in your spine
- Inhale through the nose
- Exhale with a gentle hum
- Feel vibration in chest, throat, face
- Repeat 3-5 min (or as long as you'd like)

Summary

- Why activation helps
- 9 different ways of activating your vagus nerve



Homework

- Choose 2 tools to practice daily
- Include at least one vocal tool (humming, singing, or gargling)
- Note how your body shifts after each practice
- Listen to Day 3 of the NS Reset

