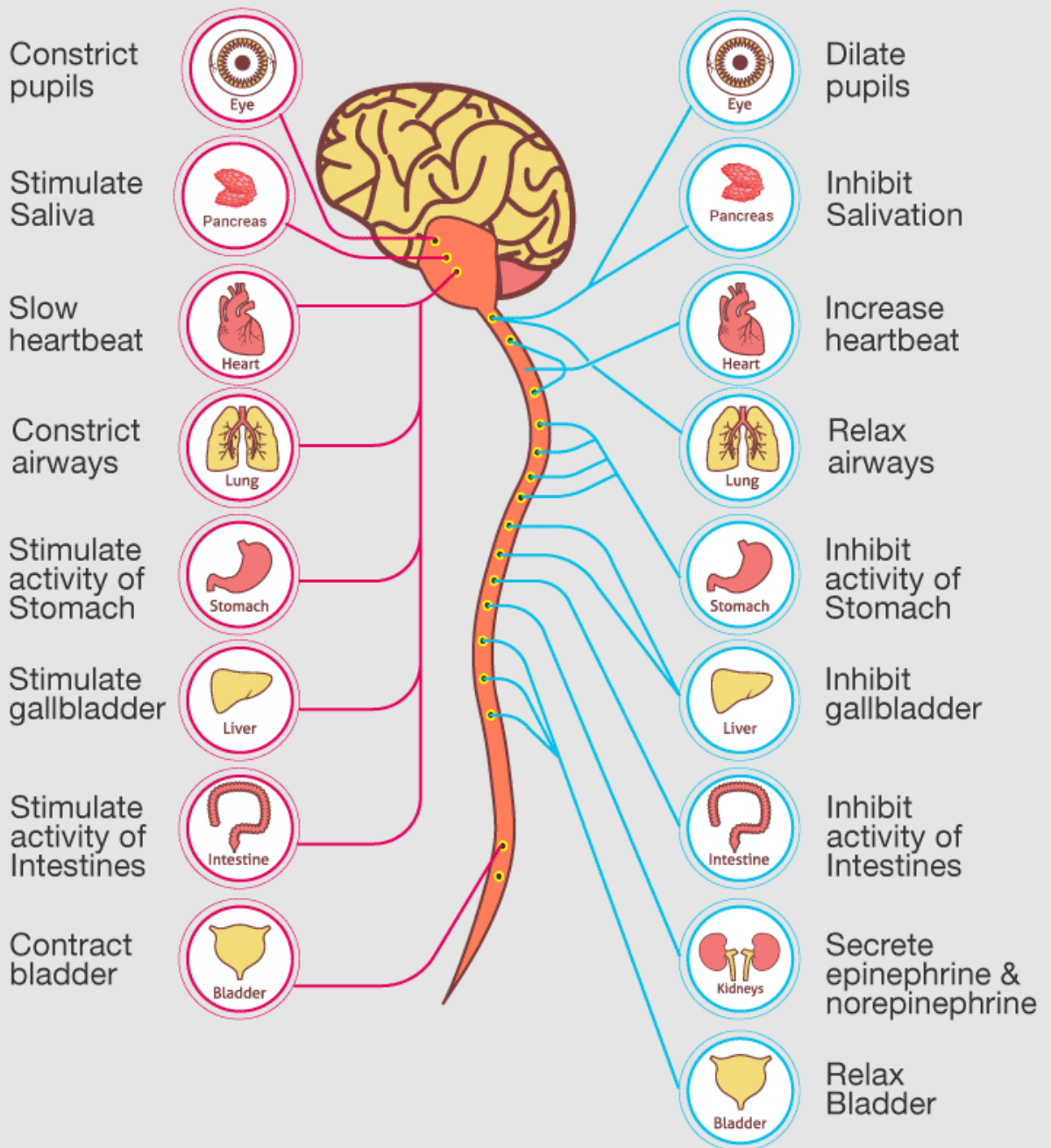


DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SYMPATHETIC AND PARASYMPATHETIC

PARASYMPATHETIC NERVES

Vs

SYMPATHETIC NERVES



Fight Or Flight Response

When faced with a life-threatening danger it often makes sense to run away or, if that is not possible, to fight. The *fight or flight response* is an *automatic* survival mechanism which prepares the body to take these actions. All of the body sensations produced are happening for good reasons – to prepare your body to run away or fight – but may be experienced as uncomfortable when you do not know why they are happening.

Thoughts racing

Quicker thinking helps us to evaluate danger and make rapid decisions. It can be very difficult to concentrate on anything apart from the danger (or escape routes) when the fight or flight response is active

If we don't exercise (e.g. run away or fight) to use up the extra oxygen then we can quickly start to feel dizzy or lightheaded

Dizzy or lightheaded

Changes to vision

Vision can become acute so that more attention can be paid to danger. You might notice 'tunnel vision', or vision becoming 'sharper'

Breathing becomes quicker and shallower

Quicker breathing takes in more oxygen to power the muscles. This makes the body more able to fight or run away

Dry mouth

The mouth is part of the digestive system. Digestion shuts down during dangerous situations as energy is diverted towards the muscles

Adrenal glands release adrenaline

The adrenaline quickly signals other parts of the body to get ready to respond to danger

Heart beats faster

A faster heart beat feeds more blood to the muscles and enhances your ability to run away or fight

Bladder urgency

Muscles in the bladder sometimes relax in response to extreme stress

Nausea and 'butterflies' in the stomach

Blood is diverted away from the digestive system which can lead to feelings of nausea or 'butterflies'

Palms become sweaty

When in danger the body sweats to keep cool. A cool machine is an efficient machine, so sweating makes the body more likely to survive a dangerous event

Hands get cold

Blood vessels in the skin contract to force blood towards major muscle groups

Muscles tense

Muscles all over the body tense in order to get you ready to run away or fight. Muscles may also shake or tremble, particularly if you stay still, as a way of staying 'ready for action'

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

The window of tolerance and different states that affect you



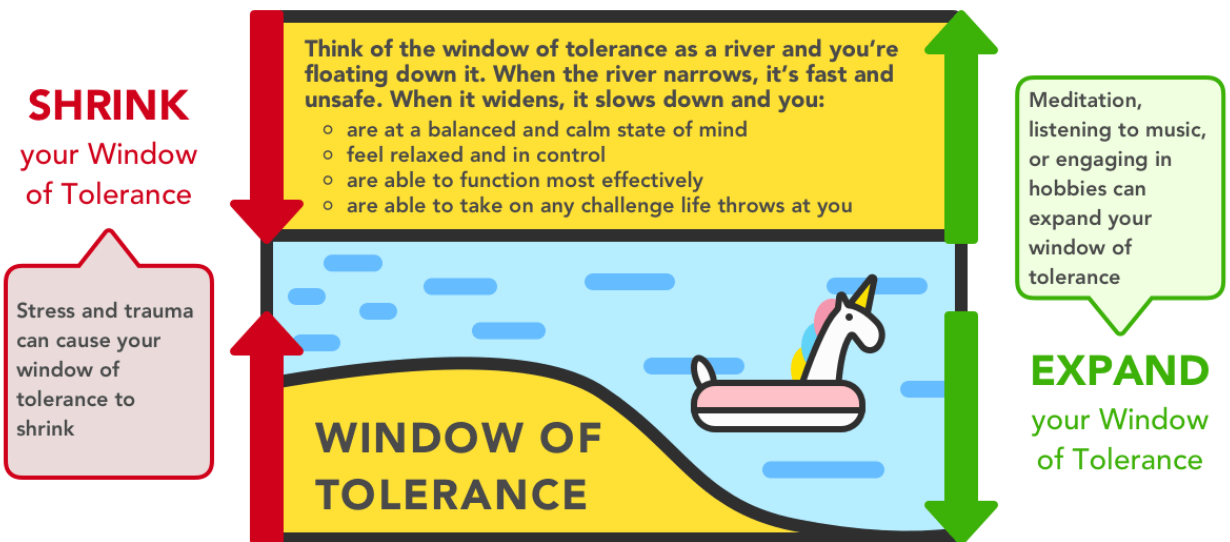
HYPERAROUSAL

- Abnormal state of increased responsiveness
- Feeling anxious, angry and out of control
- You may experience wanting to fight or run away



DYSREGULATION

- When you start to deviate outside your window of tolerance you start to feel agitated, anxious, or angry
- You do not feel comfortable but you are not out of control yet



DYSREGULATION

- You start to feel overwhelmed, your body might start shutting down and you could lose track of time
- You don't feel comfortable but you are not out of control yet



HYPOAROUSAL

- Abnormal state of decreased responsiveness
- Feeling emotional numbness, exhaustion, and depression
- You may experience your body shutting down or freeze

My Window of Tolerance

My signs of **hyper-arousal** – feeling too much – fight or flight:

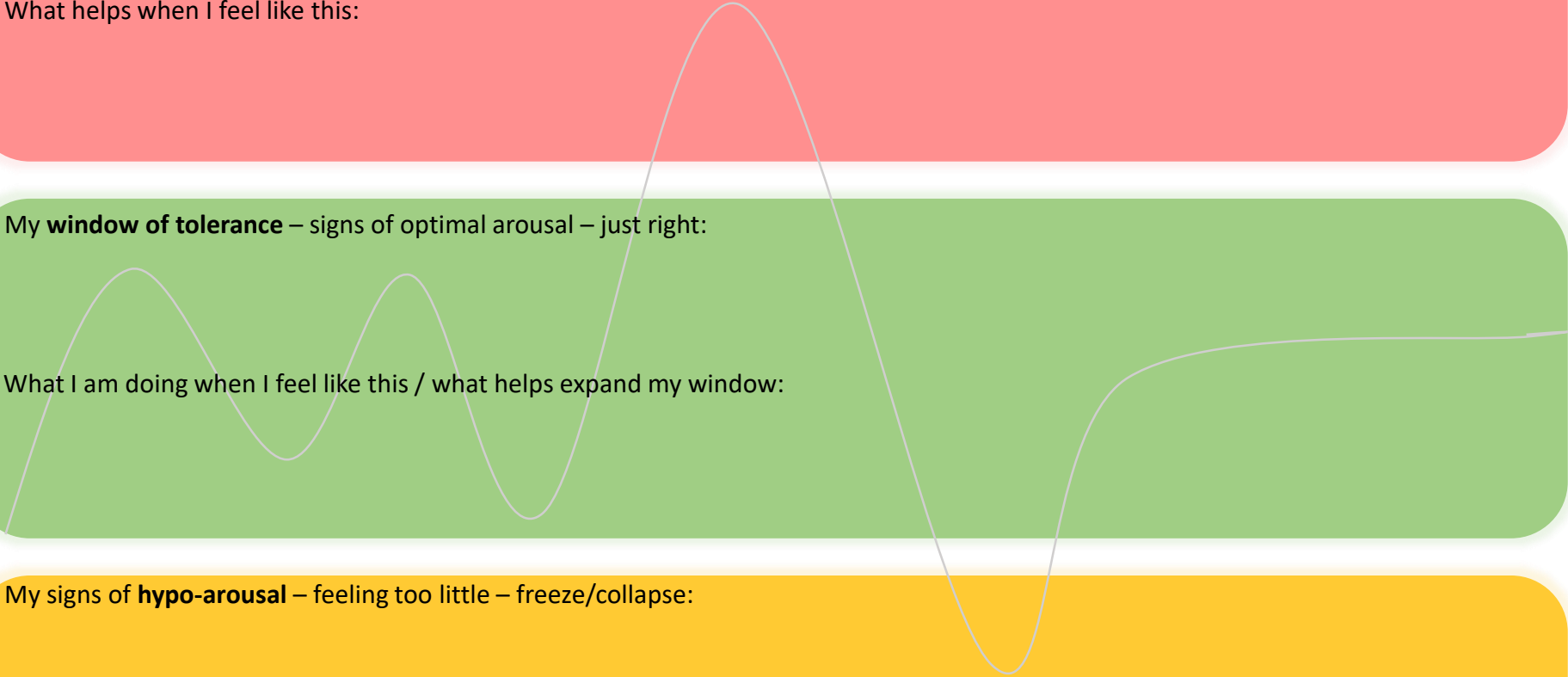
What helps when I feel like this:

My **window of tolerance** – signs of optimal arousal – just right:

What I am doing when I feel like this / what helps expand my window:

My signs of **hypo-arousal** – feeling too little – freeze/collapse:

What helps when I feel like this:



Mindfulness Exercises



Mindfulness Meditation

Find a place where you can sit quietly and undisturbed for a few moments. To begin, you might want to set a timer for about 10 minutes, but after some experience you should not be too concerned about the length of time you spend meditating.

Begin by bringing your attention to the present moment by noticing your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and then leaves your body. Before long, your mind will begin to wander, pulling you out of the present moment. That's ok. Notice your thoughts and feelings as if you are an outside observer watching what's happening in your brain. Take note, and allow yourself to return to your breathing.

Sometimes you might feel frustrated or bored. That's fine--these are just a few more feelings to notice. Your mind might start to plan an upcoming weekend, or worry about a responsibility. Notice where your thoughts are going, and accept what's happening.

Whenever you are able to, return your concentration to your breathing. Continue this process until your timer rings, or until you are ready to be done.



Body Scan

During the body scan exercise you will pay close attention to physical sensations throughout your body. The goal isn't to change or relax your body, but instead to notice and become more aware of it. Don't worry too much about how long you practice, but do move slowly.

Begin by paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations such as warmth, coolness, pressure, pain, or a breeze moving over your skin. Slowly move up your body--to your calves, thighs, pelvis, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, and finally your head. Spend some time on each of these body parts, just noticing the sensations.

After you travel up your body, begin to move back down, through each body part, until you reach your feet again. Remember: move slowly, and just pay attention.



Mindful Eating

Choose a food you would like to practice with (preferably something you can hold in your hand without getting messy). Something as simple as a single raisin will work well. Move slowly through these steps, taking a moment to focus on each one.

Before you pick up your food, notice how it looks on the table in front of you. Notice its color, how the light reflects from its surface, and its size.

Mindfulness Exercises

Now, pick up the food. Notice the weight, and how the food feels against your skin. Roll the object between your fingers, or roll it in your hand, and notice its texture. Notice if it's smooth, rough, slick, soft, firm or if it has any other properties. Hold the food to your nose, and pay attention to its smell.

Next, place the food in your mouth, on your tongue, but don't eat it. Notice how it feels in your mouth. Does the texture feel the same as on your hand? What do you taste? Roll the food around in your mouth and pay attention to the feeling.

Finally, begin to slowly chew your food. Notice how your teeth sink into it, and how the texture is different inside. Pay close attention to the flavor, and how it spreads across your tongue. Notice how your body changes—does your mouth fill with saliva? Does your tongue feel hot or cold? Continue to chew your food, paying close attention to the many sensations as you finish.



Five Senses

Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses.

What are 5 things you can see? Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.

What are 4 things you can feel? Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.

What are 3 things you can hear? Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.

What are 2 things you can smell? Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a nice smell either: maybe there's an overflowing trash can or sewer.

What is 1 thing you can taste? Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. "Taste" the air to see how it feels on your tongue.

The numbers for each sense are only a guideline. Feel free to do more or less of each. Also, try this exercise while doing an activity like washing dishes, listening to music, or going for a walk.

Deep Breathing



Deep Breathing: a relaxation technique performed by purposefully taking slow, deep breaths. When practiced regularly, deep breathing provides both immediate and long-term relief from stress and anxiety.

How Deep Breathing Works

During periods of anxiety, the body triggers a set of symptoms called the **stress response**. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid, heart rate increases, and muscles become tense. In opposition to the stress response is the **relaxation response**. Breathing becomes deeper and slower, and the symptoms of anxiety fade away. Deep breathing triggers this response.

Instructions

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes, if you would like to do so. When you're learning, try placing a hand on your stomach. If you breathe deeply enough, you should notice it rising and falling with each inhalation and exhalation.



- 1 Inhale.** Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- 2 Pause.** Hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds.
- 3 Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 seconds.
Tip: Pucker your lips, as if you are blowing through a straw, to slow your exhalation.
- 4 Repeat.** Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.

Tips

- If it isn't working, *slow down!* The most common mistake is breathing too fast. Time each step in your head, counting slowly as you do so.
- Counting out your breaths serves a second purpose. It takes your mind off the source of your anxiety. Whenever you catch your mind wandering, simply return your focus to counting.
- The times we use for each step are suggestions, and can be lengthened or decreased. Lengthen the time if it feels natural to do so, or decrease the time if you feel discomfort.

Grounding Techniques

After a trauma, it's normal to experience flashbacks, anxiety, and other uncomfortable symptoms. **Grounding techniques** help control these symptoms by turning attention away from thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing on the present moment.

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.



What are 5 things you can see? Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.



What are 4 things you can feel? Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you are sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, and other physical qualities.



What are 3 things you can hear? Pay special attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.



What are 2 things you can smell? Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.



What is 1 thing you can taste? Carry gum, candy, or small snacks for this step. Pop one in your mouth and focus your attention closely on the flavors.

Categories

Choose at least three of the categories below and name as many items as you can in each one. Spend a few minutes on each category to come up with as many items as possible.

Movies	Countries	Books	Cereals
Sports Teams	Colors	Cars	Fruits & Vegetables
Animals	Cities	TV Shows	Famous People

For a variation on this activity, try naming items in a category alphabetically. For example, for the fruits & vegetables category, say "apple, banana, carrot," and so on.

Grounding Techniques

Body Awareness

The body awareness technique will bring you into the here-and-now by directing your focus to sensations in the body. Pay special attention to the physical sensations created by each step.

1. Take 5 long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through puckered lips.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.
3. Stomp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.
4. Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.
5. Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.
6. Rub your palms together briskly. Notice and sound and the feeling of warmth.
7. Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for 5 seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.
8. Take 5 more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.

Mental Exercises

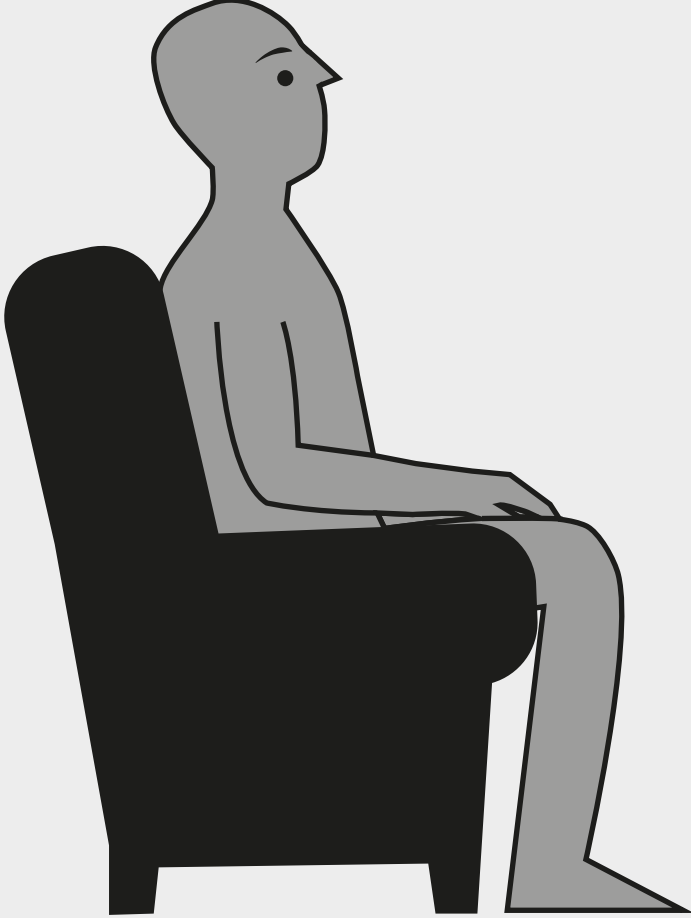
Use mental exercises to take your mind off uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. They are discreet and easy to use at nearly any time or place. Experiment to see which work best for you.

- Name all the objects you see.
- Describe the steps in performing an activity you know how to do well. For example, how to shoot a basketball, prepare your favorite meal, or tie a knot.
- Count backwards from 100 by 7.
- Pick up an object and describe it in detail. Describe its color, texture, size, weight, scent, and any other qualities you notice.
- Spell your full name, and the names of three other people, backwards.
- Name all your family members, their ages, and one of their favorite activities.
- Read something backwards, letter-by-letter. Practice for at least a few minutes.
- Think of an object and "draw" it in your mind, or in the air with your finger. Try drawing your home, a vehicle, or an animal.


Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Written by Michael Safranek
Illustrated by Mark Bennett



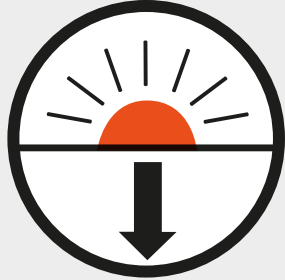
Preparation



twice a day



+



Activity

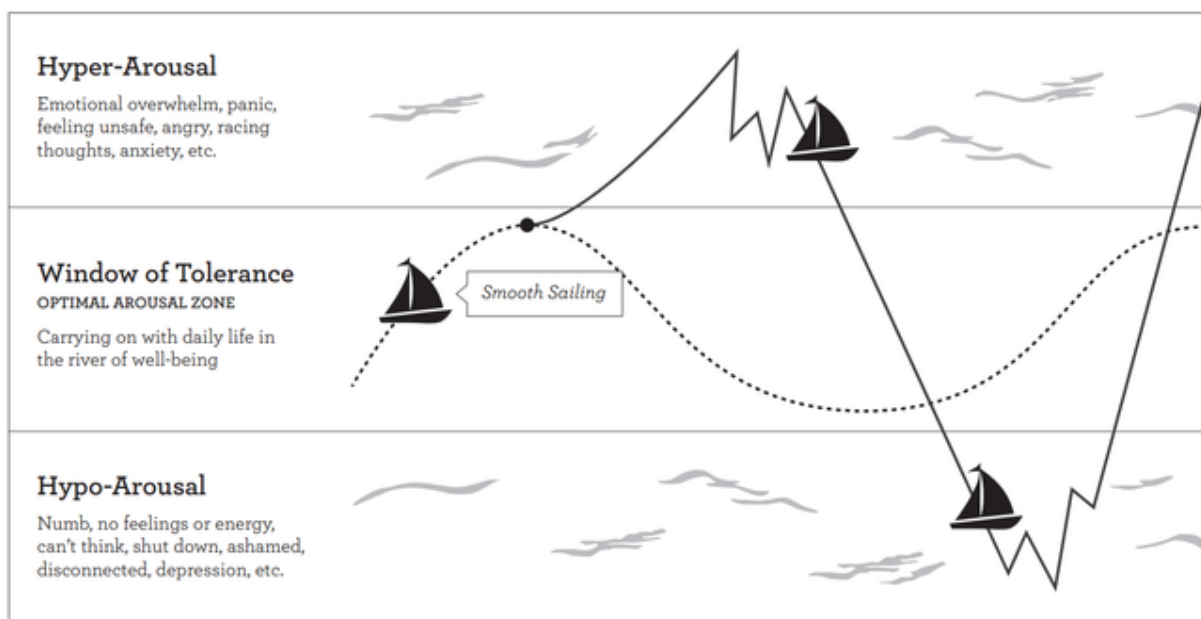
● = relax 15 seconds

● = tense 5 seconds

Window of Tolerance – Ideas for coping worksheet

- Learning how to experience ‘enough’ rather than too much or too little emotional feelings
- Be aware of what is tolerable for you so that you can hold onto feeling safe and be engaged with life and find your optimal level of arousal or window of tolerance
- Recognise when you are outside your window of tolerance and when you experience too much arousal (hyper-arousal) or not enough (hypo-arousal)
- We all have our own limits of what we can tolerate which has been shaped by our nature, personality and by our experiences in life
- When you are aware that you are moving out of your window of tolerance, you have options and choices to use coping strategies to return to stability
- Know when to reach out for support when you can’t do it on your own

(Ogden et al, 2006; Siegel, 1999; Van der Hart et al, 2006)



Task: Consider for yourself, what are the signs that you are experiencing:

1. Too much emotional intensity/arousal

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2. Just enough emotional arousal to do what I need to do

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3. Not enough emotional intensity/arousal

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.....

When you are feeling overwhelmed and experiencing too much you can try to...

- Temporarily distract yourself: slow down and take a breath and rest until you feel ready and able to cope with your feelings
- Distract yourself with healthy activities and try to focus on something other than what you are feeling
- Avoid working too much or doing things compulsively
- Make yourself a promise to return later to what is overwhelming you as soon as you are able
- If you feel angry, you could try a physical exercise like walking or gardening (focusing on the experience of the exercise)
- If you are feeling sad, you could try watching a film you usually enjoy, listening to music or ringing a friend
- Use images to contain your feelings such as balloon floating in the air, computer file or write down your feelings
- Reassure and soothe yourself-acknowledge and validate your feelings (even if you are unsure why you are feeling this way-there will be a reason)
- Practice calming breathing exercises
- Try to shift your thoughts to focusing on something else-crossword/word or computer game/counting backwards
- Use all your senses to ground yourself and be aware of the present moment
- Just notice the experience of being overwhelmed, slow down your breathing and each time you have an urge to do something harmful impulsively, allow the feeling or thought to pass through your mind, like a train that doesn't stop at the station
- Remind yourself that your feelings are normal, a part of life and it is safe to feel what you are feeling right now
- No matter how unpleasant the experience is it will end
- Recall times in the past that you have felt this way and it has passed, as this feeling will also do in time
- Share with other people that can help you think of other ideas of how to cope with difficult feelings

When you are feeling underwhelmed and experiencing too little you can try to...

- **As shutting down is often the result of feeling overwhelmed, most of the strategies used for feeling too much can be helpful here**
- **Move towards becoming more physically and then mentally active**
- **Brief vigorous activity to get your heart pumping and your energy level up, such as running upstairs or star jumps**
- **Notice all that is around you. Use all five senses and name the things you notice out loud to ground yourself in the present**
- **Get your brain more active by counting or reciting the alphabet backwards/count cars/people/trees**
- **If you feel cold (common experience), try a warm bath/blanket/hot water bottle**
- **If you feel physically numb, try to notice any areas in your body where you can feel and touch it gently such as with a blanket or stroke with a brush (and tell yourself what you can feel)**
- **Name your feelings-say it out aloud and draw your attention to it.**
- **Remind yourself that emotions can be safe and they are there for a reason**
- **Check the facts-it may be that you haven't considered all perspectives of the situation**
- **See if you can find any positive aspects of the experience that you have not noticed or ignored**
- **Ask yourself do the feelings make logical sense of the situation? Is sticking to these thoughts helpful? Is there another way of thinking about this experience?**

Task: To identify the strategies above that you have tried and that work and any others that you are willing to try.

What works for me?

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What I would like to try?

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