

The Invisible Toolkit: Practical Tools for Real-Life Regulation

1 The “Proprioceptive” Resets (Pressure-Based)

Effective tools for those who feel “floaty” or dissociated when stressed.

The Isometric Chair Press

While seated, grab the sides of your chair seat and pull upward as if you are trying to lift yourself and the chair together. Hold for 5 seconds and release suddenly.

Why it works: The intense muscle contraction followed by a release provides a clear “signal” of boundaries and presence to the brain.

The Heel Drops

If standing (or even seated), lift your heels and let them drop firmly back to the floor.

Why it works: The vibration through the skeletal system is a primitive grounding signal.

The Neuroception Signal



Your nervous system is constantly “scanning” for safety—a process called **Neuroception**.

When you are stressed, your internal alarm is stuck on high alert. These somatic tools act as a clear signal to your brain’s “Blueprint” that the immediate threat has passed, allowing your system to return to its natural, steady anchor.

Your paragraph text

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

– Viktor Frankl

3 The “Vagal” Resets (Nerve-Based)

These target the Vagus Nerve directly through the muscles of the face and throat.

The “Voo” Breath

Exhale while making a low, vibrating “Voo” sound in your chest.

Why it works: The vibration stimulates the Vagus Nerve as it passes through the throat. *Note: For an “invisible” version, try “humming” a low note internally.*

The Ear Massage

Gently massage the “hollow” part of your outer ear (the concha) with your index finger in slow circles.

Why it works: This area is supplied by the auricular branch of the Vagus Nerve.

2 The “Exteroceptive” Resets (Environment-Based)

These tools can help you “get out of your head” by anchoring into the physical space around you.

The Peripheral Expansion

Instead of focusing intensely on your monitor, soften your gaze and try to see the far left and far right edges of the room simultaneously without moving your eyes.

Why it works: Narrow “focal” vision is linked to the sympathetic (stress) system; wide “panoramic” vision triggers the parasympathetic (calm) system.

The 3-2-1 Grounding Variation

Name 3 textures you can feel (e.g. your desk, your sleeves, the chair), 2 colors you see in the room that you find “neutral,” and 1 distant sound outside your office.

Why it works: It forces the brain to process neutral environmental data, interrupting an internal stress loop.

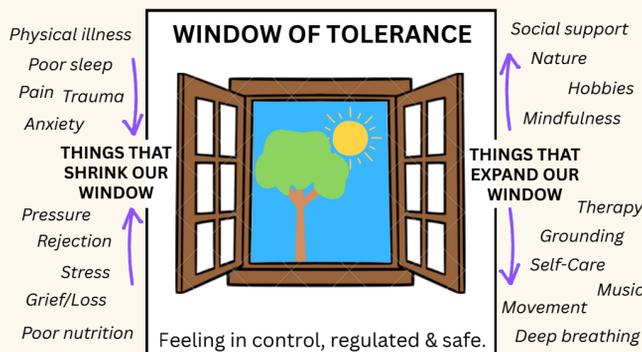
Window of Tolerance

HYPER-AROUSAL

Feeling overwhelmed, anxious or out of control. Experiencing the urge to fight or engage in conflict. Wanting to run away or avoid the situation. Physiological feelings; hyperventilating, shaking, etc.

DYSREGULATION

Feeling increasingly frustrated and/or agitated. Getting urges to explode or isolate. Uncomfortable feelings increase but still in control.



DYSREGULATION

Feeling increasingly demotivated or lethargic. Getting close to shutting down or zoning out. Uncomfortable feelings increase, but still in control.

HYPO-AROUSAL

Feeling numb, empty or frozen, inability to take action. Disconnected or zoned out, difficulties with motivation. Staring at nothing, dissociated/detached from self. Physiological feelings: Lethargic, low energy, etc.

Adopted from NICABM (2019) by Monumental Health



How Do I Know It’s Working?

Somatic regulation isn’t always a “lightbulb” moment. It’s often a series of small, quiet shifts in your biology. Watch for these signs that your nervous system is returning to its anchor.



[] **The Spontaneous Sigh:** A deep, involuntary breath or a long exhale.

[] **Softening the Armor:** Noticing your shoulders drop or your jaw unclench without effort.

[] **Warmth or Tingling:** Feeling a sense of circulation returning to your hands or feet.

[] **A “Quiet” Mind:** The internal “chatter” or looping thoughts begin to slow down.

[] **Physical Presence:** Feeling the weight of your body in your chair on your feet on the floor.

[] **Digestive Cues:** Noticing your mouth becoming more moist or a gurgle in your stomach (signs that “Rest and Digest” is online).