



NEURO FIT

An interactive guide to
nervous system regulation:
How to reduce stress,
feel better in your body,
and perform at your best.

Loren and Andrew Hogue • Co-CEOs, NeuroFit

NEUROFIT

An interactive guide to nervous system regulation:
How to reduce stress, feel better in your body, and
perform at your best.

Loren Hogue
Andrew Hogue



<https://neurofit.app>

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Ebook: 979-8-218-12992-7

PDF ISBN: 979-8-218-12991-0

Paperback ISBN: 979-8-218-13129-6

Disclaimer: This book is for informational purposes only and does not replace the advice of a medical professional. Consult your physician before making any changes to your diet, exercise or regular health plan.

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Introduction: There's Nothing Wrong With You

There's nothing wrong with you. You just have a dysregulated nervous system.

Great, glad we got that out of the way. The rest gets to be simple from here.

This book exists for three reasons:

Reason #1: So that you can learn about the nervous system and why it is so fundamental in supporting you to live your best life.

Reason #2: To clarify that nervous system regulation can be simple and straightforward - as balance comes through the body, not the mind.

Reason #3: We want you to download the NeuroFit app and begin the “doing” part of transforming your life every single day.

So expect this book to be simple, direct, and straight to the point.

Why?

Because we believe that success and results don't have to be complicated, convoluted or require a ton of misplaced time and effort.

And we believe that the more time you spend out of your head and in your body, the better (we'll explain why that's so important in Chapter One).

To do that, we've structured this short book as follows:

First, we're going to give you a super quick overview of the nervous system, and why a “bottom-up” approach works best to balance the body.

You'll leave with a clear understanding and awareness of what may be holding back your well-being, your body, and your life.

After that, we'll dive into the science and symptoms of nervous system dysregulation, and you'll complete a self-assessment quiz to help you get a bird's-eye view of any dysregulation you may currently be experiencing.

This baseline of where you are now in terms of nervous system health will help you gauge progress over time.

Next, we're going to dive straight into the practical side of things and share ways that you can begin to balance your body and nervous system in less than 5 minutes a day via NeuroFit BALANCE exercises.

We'll then take a look at what we've found to be the most effective habits that will support you in healing and building a healthy and resilient nervous system.

Finally, we'll go over how we can work together further. This may look like:

- Starting a membership with the NeuroFit app to support your nervous system transformation daily; or
- You may want to solidify your expertise in the nervous system, and become a Certified NeuroFit trainer to share the power of Neurological Fitness with your clients.

In any event, we want you to finish this book feeling clear, empowered and ready to rapidly transform your life.

In short, this book can be summarized with the following three points:

1. There is nothing wrong with you. You just have a dysregulated nervous system.
2. The good news is that there are simple, smart and scientific ways to regulate your nervous system.
3. This can be done in a simple, effective and guided manner through the NeuroFit nervous system protocol.

What we're about to share with you has dramatically changed our lives and the lives of our clients for the better. Our hope is that you'll apply these insights and do the same for your life.

If you've already decided to begin implementing these shifts, you can head to <https://neurofit.app> and download the app and get started immediately, or you can scan the QR code below:



We wish you all the best on your journey.

With love,

Loren & Andrew Hogue
Co-founders, NeuroFit

The Backstory

Never in a million years did we think we'd write a book (let alone develop an app) focused on nervous system regulation.

But life had other plans for the two of us.

We're Loren and Andrew Hogue, and we're a husband and wife team that stumbled upon the profound power of nervous system regulation while we were desperately looking for ways to heal trauma, Complex PTSD, and what we now know to be dysregulated nervous systems.

For Loren, that looked like a long 10 year journey and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent looking for answers to mental and emotional challenges following the passing of her dad in 2011.

She hired psychologists, life coaches, healers, kinesiologists, acupuncturists, naturopaths and even shamans to help her, and spent 6 years as a life coach testing and experimenting with her own wellbeing and sharing her findings.

For Andrew, it looked like a long 10 year journey building tech and studying everything related to compassionate tech he could get his hands on.

He consulted for Yale's Center For Emotional Intelligence, experimented with AI-driven mindset coaching, and even spent several months straight meditating in a desert cabin for 4+ hours a day, eating nothing but spinach and potatoes.

Together, we have combined 20 years of learnings and experience into three products that we believe will help millions of people learn how to regulate their nervous systems, including:

- This book that you're now reading;
- The NeuroFit app; and
- The NeuroFit Trainer Certification.

Above all, our sincere hope is that you'll not just *learn* about the nervous system but that you'll *embody* on a deep transformational level these changes and habits that have taken us a combined 20+ years to solidify.

We truly want you to *experience* the kind of freedom, ease, and contentment that comes from finding peace in your own body. And when you've done that, we hope you then share that gift with others.

That's enough about us...

Time for a quick sense check before we get started.

Reality Check

Before we dive into the rest of this book, let's paint a picture of what life is going to be like once you begin regulating your nervous system daily.

With a regulated nervous system you can expect to experience:

- A greater sense of peace and groundedness in your own body;
- More mental clarity, freedom from brain fog;
- More emotional stability and feeling less "triggered" by life;
- Waking up every day feeling more refreshed and ready to take on the world;
- More playfulness, creativity, openness to life and inner peace;

- A greater capacity to solve problems as they arise;
- The feeling of being more loving and compassionate towards yourself and others;
- Improved physical and mental wellbeing;
- Improved digestion and gut health;
- A greater sense of purpose and motivation; and
- Greater ease in all areas of your life.

Sounds great? That's because it is.

But despite the benefits of regulating the nervous system being numerous (and life changing), we notice that very few people will rarely take what they learn and implement to change their life.

So we want to be clear - the real *transformation* is not going to come from simply reading this book without taking action. Knowledge is *not* the same thing as action - something the nervous system automatically knows, while the mind so commonly seems to forget. Loren lovingly refers to this as “flapping about”.

The REAL transformation is going to come from downloading the app, completing the daily BALANCE training and *taking action* on the steps we recommend in this book.

Without action, we can guarantee you'll remain in the same place.

And we really don't want that for you. We want you to *experience* results and *embody* this knowledge.

So this book is not for you if you:

- Want to consume more knowledge without taking action aligned with what you learn;
- Are looking for an encyclopedic overview of all things nervous system, filled to the brim with peer-reviewed studies and unpronounceable terms;
- Want to remain where you are now without making any changes;
- Are not willing to take full ownership of your emotional, physical and mental well-being.
- Want to hold onto the beliefs and stories that you currently have about yourself and the nature of reality (be warned that this approach tends to challenge a whole lot of them).

If that's the case, then to quote the words that a well known Tibetan Lama once said to Andrew early on his journey... *"I cannot help you."*

But if you're ready to....

- Accept that nervous system regulation gets to be both simple and effective;
- Accept the next version of yourself that will undoubtedly emerge off the back of this work; and
- Take full ownership of your emotional, physical and mental well-being in order to do so,

Then you've arrived at the right place. To quote the Zen Master Lao Tzu:

When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.

Let's get rolling.

Chapter One: Ditch the Mind, Balance the Body

If you're anything like us, you've tried all of the mindset hacks, downloaded several mindfulness apps, you may have done a weekend course in meditation and completed a 12-month coaching certification.

Heck, you may have even done some psychedelics or hired a shaman in a desperate attempt to heal yourself, and wondered why you still haven't seen the results you want.

Despite the rise of personal development and wellness, burnout rates are skyrocketing, anxiety is at an all-time high (currently over 30% of the United States), and yet even with all of our breakthroughs in technology and interconnectedness, no volume of information can seemingly help us overcome these humbling human problems.

So how have chronic stress and burnout become so out of hand in the last few years? The answer is stunningly simple: ***we're looking in the wrong direction.***

It's natural to think that our stress, anxiety and burnout are simply issues of the mind - and in the short term, this is often the case. But this ignores what is perhaps the biggest piece of the puzzle: since 2020 we've experienced an unprecedented level of chronic stress on a global scale.

And as it turns out, chronic stress is a different animal, with second order effects that are not immediately visible. In fact, it alters our body's very physiology which causes serious problems, because our mind and our body are not separate as we might think, but in constant relationship with each other.

Normally, we experience *transient* stress: it passes us by, and our body returns to its resting stress baseline. This is why up until now, most stress could be resolved by simply adjusting one's mindset, or even waiting it out.

Where this gets interesting is when the stress becomes *chronic*, and doesn't just pass (read: 2020-2022). Instead of being resolved, the unprocessed stress now becomes stored in the body and nervous system as "allostatic load".

Over time, this leads to a dysregulated nervous system, which is a major contributor to an uncountable number of ailments: anxiety, burnout, depression, crying spells, chronic pain, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, and even IBS – to name just a few.

So how does this work? Our nervous system has what's called a "window of tolerance". This is how much stress it can tolerate before shifting into one of two survival responses - the heightened stress response (Sympathetic) or a shutdown response (Dorsal Vagal).

Currently, millions of people are not just experiencing the current stress of the world (financial pressures, wars, etc) - but also, the accumulated stress and allostatic load from the last few years. And without nervous systems that are trained and maintained to properly discharge this stress, our window of tolerance becomes noticeably smaller.

The reason why many "mental health" solutions have fallen short as of late is in the name itself: *they focus on the mind*. In doing so, they fail to fully address the body and the allostatic load that it has accumulated.

Our hope is that by the time you finish reading this chapter you'll:

- Never again question why mindset and mindfulness hasn't worked for you;
- Feel a sense of relief knowing that you've been sold incomplete solutions; and
- Realize that nervous system regulation is the answer you've been looking for.

So let's take this from the very top. What is nervous system regulation?

What is Nervous System Regulation?

Nervous System Regulation is what allows us to shift flexibly between different nervous system states in response to internal and external stressors. A balanced nervous system can "spring back" easily in response to stress just like a rubber band. A dysregulated nervous system often gets "stuck" in a state like fight or flight or shutdown.

Why does this matter? Well according to Dr. Stephen Porges' Polyvagal theory first introduced in 1994, our nervous system potentiates and limits our range of behavior, and significantly influences the way we experience the world around us.

Let that sink in for a moment: *our nervous system significantly influences the way we experience the world around us.*

The implications of this impact all areas of our life, whether we are consciously aware of it or not. And this is why we are deeply passionate about helping people develop what we have coined “Neurological Fitness” at NeuroFit, which is a measure of:

- The overall flexibility, balance and resilience of the nervous system; and
- The ability of the nervous system to adapt to changes in the environment, and to respond to demands placed upon it.

Without a strong Neurological Fitness baseline, we are more susceptible to:

- Chronic stress and burnout
- Anxiety
- Buildup of allostatic load in the nervous system;
- Health issues; and
- Emotional dysregulation.

On the plus side, the benefits of Neurological Fitness are numerous and include:

- Improved mood and emotional balance;
- Increased creativity;
- Hormonal balance;
- Improved digestive function;
- Reduced stress, anxiety and overwhelm;
- Better sleep and physical recovery; and
- Increased overall resilience.

There are many benefits to having a nervous system that is fit and able to meet the demands placed upon it.

So it became clear to us based on our research and studies that chronic stress and burnout (that we had both experienced over the years) had to be addressed through the body and not the mind.

Let's dive into our first case study - one of our own certified NeuroFit trainers.

Stacey, Founder of Wyld Chyld Healing & Certified NeuroFit Trainer

Prior to starting her NeuroFit journey, Stacey experienced severe anxiety, regular panic attacks, skin picking, overwhelm and emotional and hormonal dysregulation. These were all affecting her career, finances and her partnership.

When Stacey started the NeuroFit app protocol, within a very short period of time, she found that she was able to regulate and calm her anxiety quickly and avoid panic attacks as a result. She also noticed that she was more grounded and clear-minded and getting less triggered throughout the day by life's stressors.

A big physical shift she also noticed was that her self-described OCD behavior decreased in intensity, and as a result, she was picking at her skin less, a habit she had developed from childhood as a self-soothing mechanism. She now reports that her skin is clear and healthy as a result.

In her own words:

"I had such phenomenal results with Neurofit. I knew I had to share it and help guide others on this journey of nervous system regulation [by becoming] one of the first trainers in Neurological Fitness in Australia. I am getting amazing results with my clients."

The Power of Afferent Nerves

As it turns out, there is a scientific reason for why Stacey has had such fast results with Neurological Fitness - 80% of the nerves in the body are *afferent*, which means they go up from the body up to the brain. Only 20% of the nervous system runs from the brain down to the body.

What does this imply? Imagine your brain and your body tell different stories about something stressful that's happened. Your brain might "think" things are fine, but if your nervous system "feels" otherwise, it wins.

The visual example we like to use is a match of tug of war – you versus four opponents of equal strength to you. You technically *could* win - but it's highly unlikely for that to happen consistently.

Now suppose you have a nervous system that's out of balance. What we know is that the more dysregulated the nervous system, and the higher the allostatic load, the stronger the biological response becomes (envision yourself now facing off against four NFL linebackers).

The good news? The converse also holds true – our nervous system can be our greatest ally in supporting greater well-being. And it's quite simple to create a balanced nervous system - it just takes the right ingredients and awareness.

These ingredients are embodiment (think: exercise, social play, and stillness), nourishment (think: proper sleep, diet, water intake, and sunlight), and protection from influences that disturb it (think: online stress, social fatigue, alcohol, and eating right before bed). We'll get into these in more detail in Chapter Five, but we trust you're getting the gist of where we're heading with this.

So what does this mean? Simply stated, this means if the body *perceives* stress or danger (real or imagined), these survival-based signals are overpowering to even the strongest of mindsets. And the silver lining is that taking advantage of these same *afferent* nerves leads to amazing results – fast.

With the above in mind, it should now be clear that the best way to combat stress is through the body.

But before we dive into the *how* of nervous system balance, let's introduce a few other concepts that are important to understand.

The Vagus Nerve And The Vagal Brake

The nervous system is regulated by the Vagus Nerve: a central nerve running from the brain down through the abdomen, and connected to every major organ in the body.

The Vagal Brake is the part of the Vagus Nerve that controls the nervous system's shifts between states. A strong vagal brake means more precision and smoother transitions between states.

However, as we will see, chronic stress takes a significant toll on the strength of the Vagal Brake, and as a result, our transitions to dysregulated states become much more abrupt.

Let's use the analogy of a car. Imagine you're driving a luxury vehicle with high-performance brakes and smooth acceleration. When you press on the gas pedal, the car speeds up smoothly, quickly, and effortlessly. And when you hit the brakes, the transition is so nice and smooth that you barely notice it.

The driving experience is balanced, luxurious and pleasurable. This is similar to a healthy Vagal Brake that can respond appropriately (accelerating and braking) as needed.

Conversely, let's imagine a worn and beat-up old vehicle with a set of brakes that are, as Loren would call them, "dodgy". When you accelerate in this vehicle, the whole car lurches forward and begins to rattle. And when you hit the brakes, your whole body jolts forward in response.

As a result, during your driving experience you'll likely be on high alert for the first sign that you may need to accelerate or slam on the brakes. The experience is stressful – this can be likened to low Vagal Tone.

We want you to have a Vagal Brake and healthy Vagal Tone that is equivalent to driving a well-serviced luxury vehicle. This will allow you to snap into action when needed, but also cruise along smoothly most of the time, so you can enjoy the ride of life.

The BALANCE training exercises we'll teach you in the coming chapters will help you develop the Neurological Fitness that will support healthy Vagal Tone.

Polyvagal Theory

Polyvagal Theory was developed by Dr. Stephen Porges back in the 90s. It proposes that the autonomic nervous system ("ANS"), and the 3 main physical states it shifts between, are largely responsible for our adaptive behavioral strategies. Those three distinct neural circuits are:

- The Ventral Vagal Circuit (think: rest & digest)
- The Sympathetic Circuit (think: fight or flight)
- The Dorsal Vagal Circuit (think: freeze or shutdown)

Each of these circuits is responsible for different aspects of the body's response to stress and danger (we'll cover this in detail in the later chapters).

Our in-app data has shown that applying Polyvagal Theory can improve the functional treatment of stress, anxiety and trauma.

The theory suggests that the different neural circuits that make up the ANS are constantly interacting with each other, and that the balance between these circuits is crucial for maintaining mental and physical health.

The Primary Nervous System States

Let's dive into a brief overview of the three primary nervous system states – we'll then introduce the 3 secondary (or “mixed”) nervous system states.

The Ventral Vagal Circuit

The ventral vagal circuit is responsible for the body's "rest and digest" response. This circuit is activated when the body is safe and relaxed. When the ventral vagal circuit is activated, the heart rate slows, blood pressure decreases, and the digestive system is able to function properly. The ventral vagal circuit also supports social engagement behaviors.

Example: Imagine you're 30 minutes into catching up with a longtime friend. There's a great sense of ease, openness and happiness that seems to be effortlessly present. You feel relaxed and joyful - and you're in Ventral Vagal.

Sympathetic Nervous System (Fight or Flight)

The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for the body's "fight or flight" response and mobilizes defensive behaviors. This circuit is activated when the body is under stress or in danger. When the sympathetic nervous system is activated, the heart rate increases, blood pressure rises, and the body's muscles are primed for action. Here we commonly experience anxiety, overthinking/looping thoughts, anger, and tension.

Example: Imagine you just had to slam your brakes on to avoid rear-ending a driver in front of you who was texting. You're on very high alert, your heart is racing, and you're likely feeling angry about this situation - you're now in Sympathetic.

Dorsal Vagal (Freeze)

The dorsal vagal circuit is responsible for the body's "freeze" response. This circuit is activated when the body is overwhelmed by stress or danger. When the dorsal vagal circuit is activated, the heart rate and blood pressure drop dramatically, and the body's muscles tense up in order to protect itself. This can manifest as:

- Paralysis in the event of danger;
- Procrastination due to fear;
- Lack of motivation and hopelessness long after an event has passed;
- Dissociation from the body following a traumatic event.

Example: You find yourself in a conflict with one of your colleagues at work. The next day, you feel very flat, numb, emotionally fatigued, and you don't want to get out of bed or feel like doing much. You're in Dorsal Vagal.

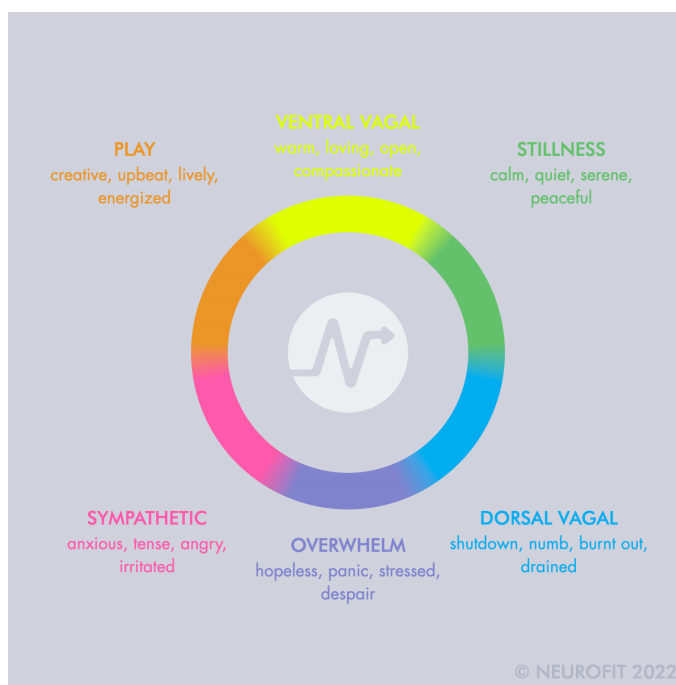
In addition to these primary states, there are also three “in-between” states that arise as mixed states of Ventral Vagal, Sympathetic, and Dorsal Vagal.

The Mixed Nervous System States

There are 3 what we call “in-between” nervous system states. These are:

- The Play State (mixed Ventral Vagal + Sympathetic)
- The Stillness State (mixed Ventral Vagal + Dorsal Vagal)
- The Overwhelm State (mixed Sympathetic + Dorsal Vagal)

They sit between the primary states as depicted here on the NeuroFit Ring:



The Play State (Ventral Vagal + Sympathetic)

The Play State is a combination of the Ventral Vagal State and the Sympathetic State.

By coupling Ventral Vagal safety with the high energy of Sympathetic, the nervous system learns to be activated without feeling threatened or responding with aggression. Instead of dropping straight from rest-and-digest into a stress response, play teaches the nervous system to remain balanced, open, and creative, even when we may perceive some stress.

This is why socializing dogs as young puppies is important, and why children benefit from playing team sports at a young age. As a result, increased exposure to Play also helps us tap into creativity, increases our resilience to stress, and improves emotional regulation.

If you've ever seen a dog get the "zoomies", or athletes competing during a sporting event, these are perfect examples of Play.

The Stillness State (Dorsal Vagal + Ventral Vagal)

Stillness combines Ventral Vagal openness with Dorsal Vagal immobilization. Similar to how Play builds resistance to the Sympathetic State, Stillness builds nervous system resistance to Dorsal Vagal – the body's natural shut down/freezing response to excessive stress.

Stillness helps us learn to remain calm under stress, and increasing our familiarity with it also makes it easier to fall asleep at night as many of the same neural pathways are used.

Some common emotions experienced when in this state are serenity, calmness, and inner peace.

The Overwhelm State

The Overwhelm State is a combination of Dorsal Vagal shutdown and Sympathetic activation energy.

When in this state, we commonly experience feelings like hopelessness, panic, and despair. It's often a lightbulb moment for those new to Neurological Fitness when they realize that many of these emotions are a biological response driven by the nervous system.

Why Mindset is Only Part of the Solution

By this point, we trust that you are starting to see that the nervous system plays a primary role in your overall health and well-being.

This is the reason why many mind-focused solutions are ineffective in today's current context. When chronic stress is present, many of the symptoms these solutions hope to alleviate (emotional imbalance, overthinking, are driven mostly by the nervous system.

So if you've been doing mindset and mindfulness work for a while now, and you're looking for faster and more transformative results, we invite you to take a body-led approach to your personal development.

In the words of Jessica M, who left this App Store review:

Awesome App



Aug 31

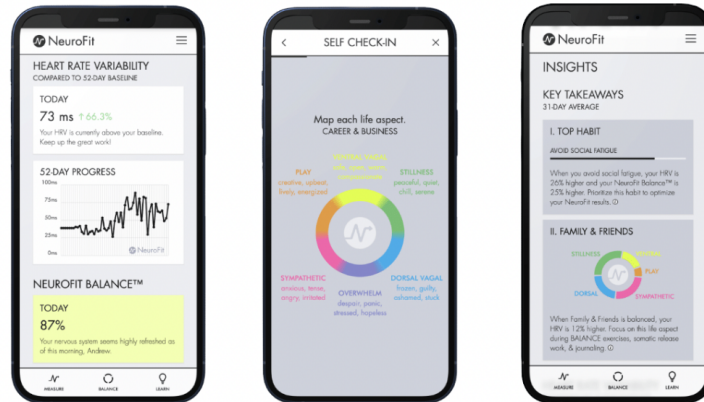
Jessica M. 🇺🇸

I never felt in control of my nervous system before this. I felt at the mercy of my emotions and cycle. I love everything about this app— it actually helps me change my state if I'm overwhelmed and frustrated. It's so simple! That's the beauty of it.

Key Chapter Takeaways

- Our nervous system potentiates and limits our range of behavior, and significantly influences the way we experience the world around us.
- Neurological Fitness is the key to developing a resilient nervous system that can handle the stressors of the modern world.
- There are 6 key nervous system states that we can move between - Ventral Vagal, Sympathetic, Dorsal Vagal, Sympathetic, Play, Stillness, and Overwhelm.
- Once we can clearly identify which state we are in, we have the ability to shift our nervous system into a state that best serves our overall being.

Ready to Jump Ahead? Download the NeuroFit App



If you haven't yet, download the NeuroFit App via the App Store (on Apple or Android) by scanning the QR code below, or by visiting <https://neurofit.app/>



The NeuroFit App is designed specifically to measure and optimize nervous system health on a daily basis. While you can get a number of benefits from reading the book, the real transformation comes from aligned action - we recommend that you start an app membership to do so. We've designed NeuroFit to tailor recommendations directly for *your* nervous system. It takes all of the guesswork out of what we're going to cover in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter Two: The Science of Nervous System Dysregulation

As mentioned in the last chapter:

Our nervous system significantly influences the way we experience the world around us.

And data from our app suggests this may very well be the case. After seven days on the app, our average member reports:

- 54% less overall stress, and
- 35% greater sense of peace

What's really interesting is that this stress measurement spans *7 different life aspects*. As people balance their nervous system, they don't just experience less stress in one area of life, but in *all of them*. Neurological Fitness doesn't just resolve stress: *it changes the way we experience the world itself*.

In this chapter we're going to cover:

- The numerous benefits of Neurological Fitness;
- The symptoms of a dysregulated nervous system;
- Understanding allostatic load and your window of tolerance;
- Chronic stress, trauma and burnout; and
- A plan of action for your nervous system

At the end of this chapter, we've included an interactive exercise that will help to clarify a lot of this. The NeuroFit Nervous System Dysregulation Quiz follows the format of this chapter, and will help paint a picture as to where your nervous system is balanced and imbalanced.

What is Nervous System Dysregulation?

Nervous system dysregulation is a condition in which the body's stress response becomes constantly activated, even in the absence of a stressful situation and long after a stressful or perceived threat has passed.

After an extended period of time, this prolonged activation often eventuates as burnout: a condition in which the body is unable to cope with further stress due to mental, physical and/or emotional exhaustion.

There are many symptoms that suggest dysregulation and they include:

- Edginess, irritability and inability to relax
- Hypervigilance
- Chronic anxiety or depression
- Chronic stress
- Chronic tiredness or fatigue
- Insomnia
- Digestive issues like heartburn, gut issues, bloating, indigestion, and diarrhea.
- Emotional volatility
- Unresolved aches & pains
- Immune issues and frequent infections
- Brain fog or trouble concentrating

And there are many ways in which dysregulation can manifest in our personal lives. Here are just a few of the things we've experienced and heard from clients over the years:

"I'm always anxious about money and anytime I make more of it I find ways to get rid of it."

"I'm successful by most people's standards, but I feel like I keep running into an invisible wall".

"Even though I've had a good night's sleep, I always experience brain fog and cannot focus on my tasks."

"I'm always on high alert and I don't know why".

"I often feel as though something really bad is about to happen. And I've felt that way for years".

"I have trouble getting close to people and forming intimate relationships. It's really painful to experience the fear that comes with it."

“I experience chronic pain every day and no one seems to have any answers for me.”

Any of these sound familiar?

They all point to nervous system dysregulation, and no amount of positive thinking, mindset or manifestation will effectively resolve them...

...until you address the root cause: *your nervous system*.

The good news: when you learn to realign your nervous system and develop nervous system resilience, the invisible wall crumbles – we’ll discuss how in the next Chapter. And the effects of taking these steps are often experienced as profoundly transformative.

As explained by one of our app members from the Dominican Republic:

Exactly what I've been needing



Oct 15

Adriegm ·

After 15 years of mystery symptoms, I finally put the dots together that my nervous system is super dysregulated. In just a couple uses, the NeuroFit app has helped me lower my seizures, feel more grounded and actually follow through with my self care and regulation practices. It's gold! Simple, to the point and so effective.

Before we dive into the how, let's cover a few more key things that you need to understand about your nervous system.

What is Chronic Stress?

It's become normal these days to admit to being highly stressed, and even burnt out. As a society, we've normalized grind culture – and collectively, we're paying the price.

So what role does Chronic Stress play with the nervous system? As it turns out, a massive one. Chronic Stress changes the nervous system on a physiological level. It leads to the buildup of Allostatic Load (unprocessed stress stored in the body), which changes our baseline stress level. This affects the following:

- Digestion and the gut;
- Mood and emotions;
- Processing of stress;
- Creativity + focus;
- The immune system;
- Sleep quality; and
- Our ability to socialize.

Loren's words upon discovering this were something like: "Far out!"

When we experience stress, our nervous system responds by shifting into a higher gear. The sympathetic nervous system is activated, which leads to the release of stress hormones like cortisol and norepinephrine.

These hormones prepare our body for the "fight or flight" response by increasing our heart rate and blood pressure, and by redirecting blood flow away from our digestive system and towards our muscles.

In the short term, this response helps us to deal with stressful situations. However, if we are constantly under stress, our body learns to stay in this state of high alert, which leads to nervous system dysregulation.

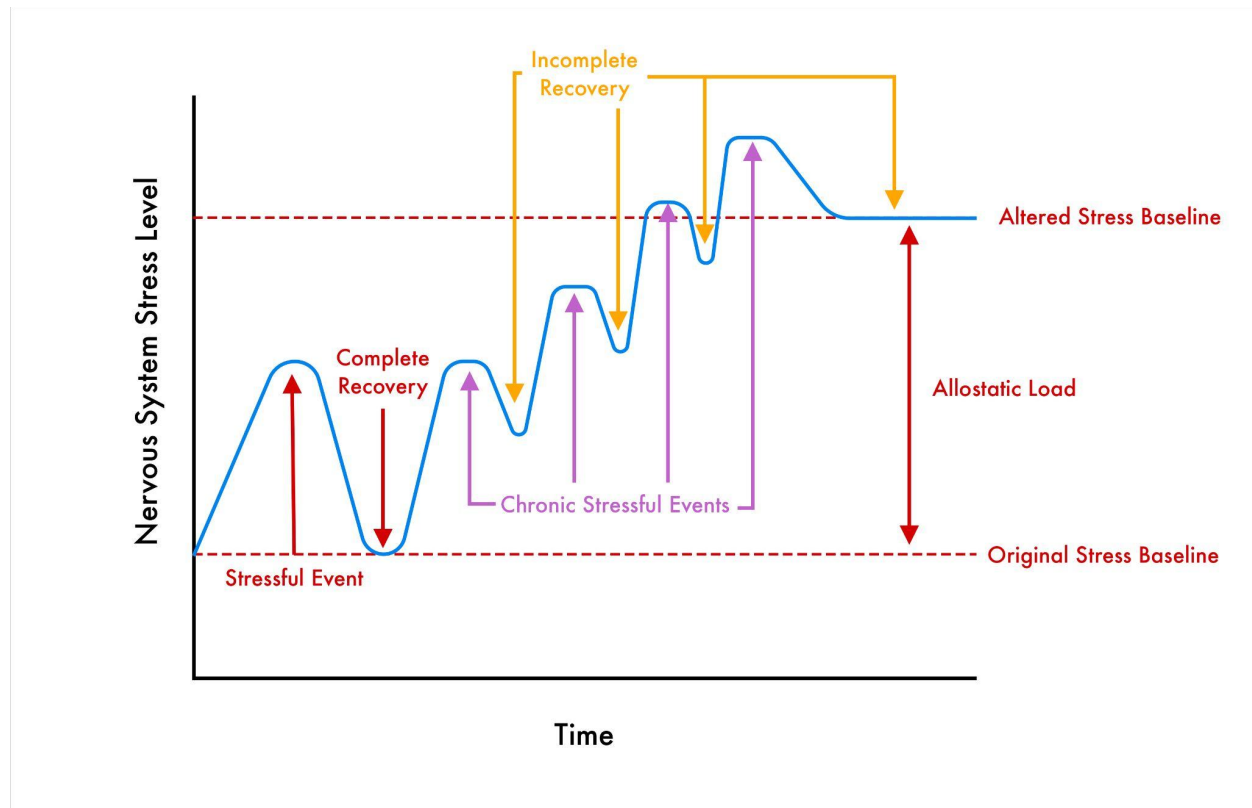
Allostatic Load: Stored Stress In The Body

When stress is experienced over prolonged periods of time, it builds up in the nervous system. As the nervous system holds onto more and more stress, it becomes less flexible, and more prone to moving into fight or flight or shutdown responses. This is due to excessive 'Allostatic Load' - how far the nervous system has deviated from its normal resting baseline due to stored stress.

This can have immediate impacts on emotional well-being, mental clarity, and performance if not managed properly. With high allostatic load, the nervous system shifts into a dysregulated state more easily, making it more difficult to remain in the Play

state where our performance is at its best, and more difficult to shift into the Stillness state in order to wind down each night.

With nervous system regulation, we seek to reverse this process, by reducing the buildup of allostatic load. We'll cover more on this in the next chapter.



What is the Window of Tolerance?

Everyone's nervous system has a given window of tolerance: the perceived stress that it can handle before shifting into a dysregulated state.

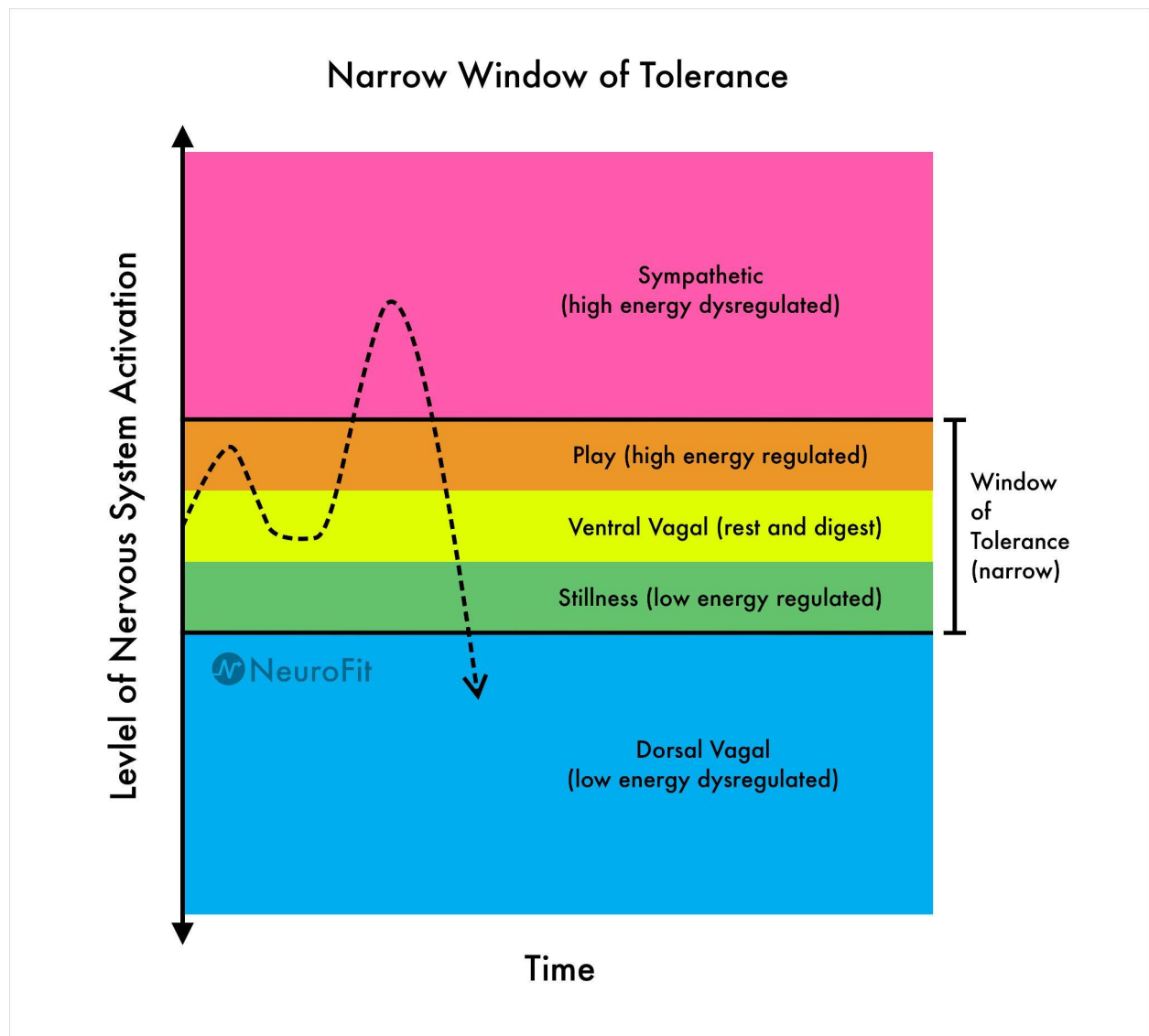
Higher Allostatic Load = more likely to experience dysregulation

When our nervous system is chronically dysregulated => Burnout

Over time, high allostatic load leads to a relatively ineffective Vagal Brake, and our body will more easily transition between the Sympathetic activated and Dorsal Vagal shutdown states.

This then further perpetuates the cycle of dysregulation and creates a “feedback loop” - where we often find ourselves swinging between high energy stress (Sympathetic) and low energy crashes (Dorsal Vagal).

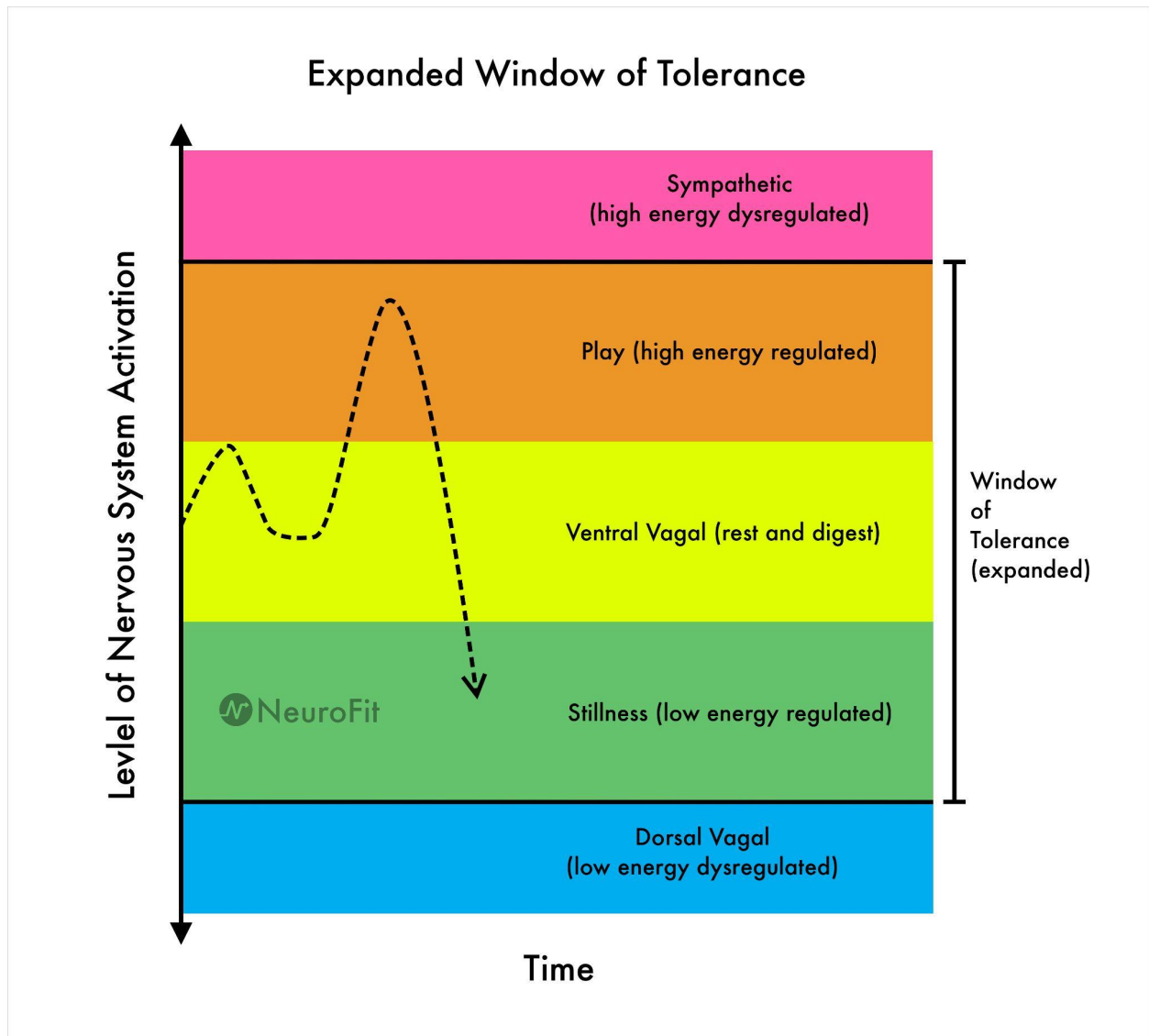
A "narrow" window of tolerance, caused by nervous system dysregulation is below.



Given that the Sympathetic, Dorsal Vagal and Overwhelm states are more pronounced, the chances that the range of life situations that we can experience from Play, Ventral Vagal and Stillness is reduced.

The goal over time is to “expand” the window of tolerance - improving our nervous system’s resilience so that it can hold more before shifting into a dysregulated state.

We've depicted this "expanded" window below. By expanding our window of tolerance, the likelihood of remaining in the Play, Ventral Vagal or Stillness states in response to challenging experiences is increased.



In Chapter Four, we'll share some daily exercises that will help you expand your window of tolerance.

How to Measure Nervous System Balance using the NeuroFit app

When it comes to the nervous system, we measure balance and results in two ways:

- Through objective nervous system measurement (with HRV); and
- Through subjective self-assessment

We have found that combining the two types of data makes for a much richer and more meaningful experience, as users can accurately pinpoint what affects their nervous system, well-being and performance the most within just 1-2 weeks.

Measuring Objective Results with Heart Rate Variability (HRV) Measurement

HRV is a clinically validated measure of nervous system readiness, and is best measured at the same time each day.

The NeuroFit app takes 1-minute finger readings through a mobile phone's camera to measure HRV. This is a clinically-validated technique called photoplethysmography (or PPG for short). Effectively, our finger color changes subtly as our heart beats – we use this as a proxy for measuring heartbeat pacing.

This achieves 96+% accuracy relative to a wearable – with no wearable required.

Measuring Subjective Results: Interoception with Daily NeuroFit Check-Ins

We use the NeuroFit ring to capture daily Interoception data. *Interoception* is the process by which we perceive the inner state of our body. By tuning into your nervous system each morning, you increase the awareness of your body and inner sensations, which, in turn, reduces the intensity of dysregulated states.

Given that everyone's nervous system is unique, we aim to help our members identify which habits best nourish/adversely affect their nervous system, by capturing daily habit data, and then discovering trends with respect to your interoception and HRV measurements.

Key Chapter Takeaways

- Our nervous system significantly influences the way we experience the world around us.
 - Nervous system dysregulation is a condition in which the body's stress response becomes constantly activated, even in the absence of stress.
 - Chronic Stress changes nervous system physiology and increases Allostatic Load (unprocessed stress stored in the body).
 - Everyone's nervous system has a given Window of Tolerance: the perceived stress that it can handle before shifting into a dysregulated state.
 - We can measure the balance of our nervous system in two ways:
 - Through objective nervous system measurement (with HRV); and
 - Through subjective self-assessment (ie, interoception).
-

Quiz: Nervous System Dysregulation

Now that we've laid a proper foundation for nervous system dysregulation, it's time for you to take action by:

- Taking the NeuroFit Nervous System Dysregulation Quiz; and
- Heading to the next chapters where we begin to cover different energy types and daily exercises that you can complete to regulate your nervous system.

To begin, scan the QR Code below or head to <https://neurofit.app/quiz>.



Chapter 3: Get to Know Your Nervous System

Imagine this: you purchase two sensitive house plants. You leave for work, and when you come home, one of the plants is shriveled up and clearly unhappy. You realize the plant has been in direct sunlight all day and as a result, it struggled.

The other one looks happier than ever - it was left by your humidifier, out of direct sunlight, and as a result, it's thriving.

In the same way that plants have specific attractions, aversions and requirements for them to flourish, the human nervous system is no different.

And given that we all have different backgrounds and experiences that have shaped what our nervous system is responsive to, it's critical to get to know *your* nervous system: what it needs most, what to avoid, what leads it to the Ventral Vagal safety and openness we all crave.

For some people, this looks like daily social play and avoiding eating too close to bedtime, while for others, this may be a daily stillness practice and avoiding social fatigue at all costs.

By getting to know your nervous system, you can hone in on exactly what it needs, which is a direct roadmap to greater balance. For that reason, in this chapter you're going to:

- Identify your natural "Energy Type";
- Identify some ways you can balance your nervous system within a few minutes with NeuroFit BALANCE trainings; and
- Understand how to overcome the resistance to change that is biologically built into the nervous system itself.

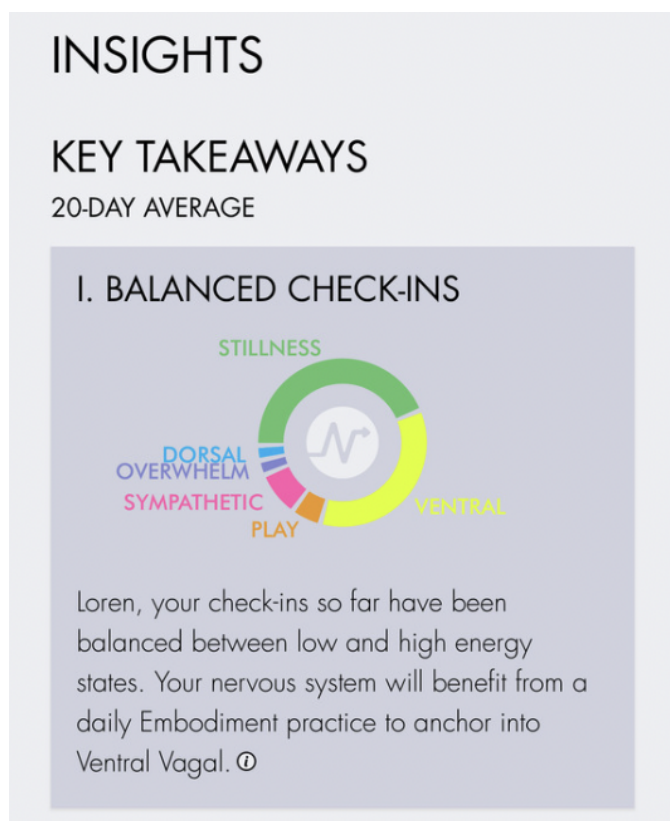
Nervous System Energy Types

By now, we hope you've been taking action using the NeuroFit app and that you've completed the following:

- Your first check-in (we'll discuss why this is important shortly);

- Identified areas of your life (Life Aspects) where you may be in a more “negative” state; and
- That you’ve completed at least one BALANCE training inside the app.

If you’ve completed at least 2 check-ins, you’ll notice that the app now tells you what your predominant energy type is. It looks something like this:



“What is my energy type?”, you may be wondering.

While Andrew was working on the recommendation engine for the NeuroFit app’s exercise library, what emerged was an insight - balancing the nervous system from each negative state depends on what a member’s nervous system is most attuned to and responds best to.

On average, within a 5 minute session, over 96% of users end up re-balancing their nervous system and shifting out of a dysregulated state back into regulation.

And to ensure this happens, it's critical to recommend the right exercises at the right time - and therefore, it's critical to understand where a client spends most of their time on the NeuroFit ring. As a result, we've identified 3 main energy types:

- High energy clients (think: more Play and Sympathetic energy),
- Grounded energy clients (think: more Stillness and Dorsal Vagal energy), and
- Balanced energy clients

Where you sit naturally determines how you can best go about balancing your nervous system.

NOTE: if you're using the app, you don't need to do any thinking. The app automatically categorizes your nervous system relative to the rest of our community based on your check-in data.

High Energy Members

High energy people tend to have a lot of sympathetic energy and play energy. They're also more energetic by nature, tend to be more animated in their demeanor, tend to feel more anxiety and tension, and they express anger or frustration more readily.

They are more likely to experience the Sympathetic state more than Dorsal Vagal. These people will often need to discharge more excess energy during the day with a BALANCE training exercise or other high energy activities and their biggest struggle is turning off their nervous system.

Does this sound like you? If so, you'll benefit significantly from introducing a daily Stillness practice into your life by doing the NeuroFit exercises, meditating or doing something like Tai Chi. The catch? This isn't going to feel comfortable at first – but you're going to see amazing benefits from it.

You'd also benefit from laying down and doing the "Eye Press Breathing" exercise in the NeuroFit app as it's a great way to switch off at the end of the day and familiarize yourself with nervous system stillness in a simple and casual way.

Grounded Energy Members

Grounded energy people tend to experience more of the Stillness and Dorsal Vagal states and they're more likely to be in the negative state of Dorsal Vagal than they are to be in the Sympathetic state.

Because these people are more likely to be in the Dorsal Vagal state, they are also more likely to experience stuckness or feeling dissociated from their own body.

People that fall into this energy type will benefit significantly from lots of social play and exercise, so prioritizing these two activities in particular is crucial.

If you're a Grounded Energy member, we recommend the following BALANCE trainings in the NeuroFit App to help shift your energy:

- *Body Tapping* is a great exercise to help you ground initially before doing other exercises and to bring you back into the body. It's also a great exercise for increasing *interoception* (bodily awareness).
- *Sacred Rage* is a great exercise for releasing trapped anger, and for helping you re-access this emotion if you are dissociated from it and have repressed it. This is commonly experienced by Grounded members.
- *Belly Ball Rolling* on a daily basis is a great way to engage the Enteric Nervous System, and it is also helpful for increasing interoception which serves to counteract the desire to dissociate from the body.

Balanced Energy Members

And finally, Balanced Energy Members are the third energy type. These people tend to sit or move between the High Energy and Grounded Energy states.

The good news if you're the Balanced Energy type is that you will generally require less guidance and effort to regulate your nervous system and find yourself in a positive state. You'll also likely only need one BALANCE exercise to rebalance any dysregulation you may be experiencing.

If this is you, we recommend maintaining a 5-minute daily interoception practice, as this will ensure that your nervous system stays resilient and capable of responding to changes in life.

Some examples of interoception NeuroFit exercises include:

- Ventral Vagal exercises such as:
 - Belly Ball Rolling;
 - Body Tapping;
 - Arm & Leg Squeezes; and
 - Lower Belly Massage.
- Other activities such as:
 - Yoga;
 - Meditation;
 - Tai Chi; and
 - Breathwork.

All of these exercises can help to increase awareness of the body and the breath and in turn, awareness of the interoceptive system. By increasing interoceptive awareness, embodiment practices help improve emotional regulation and nervous system balance.

Why It's Important to Know Your Energy Type

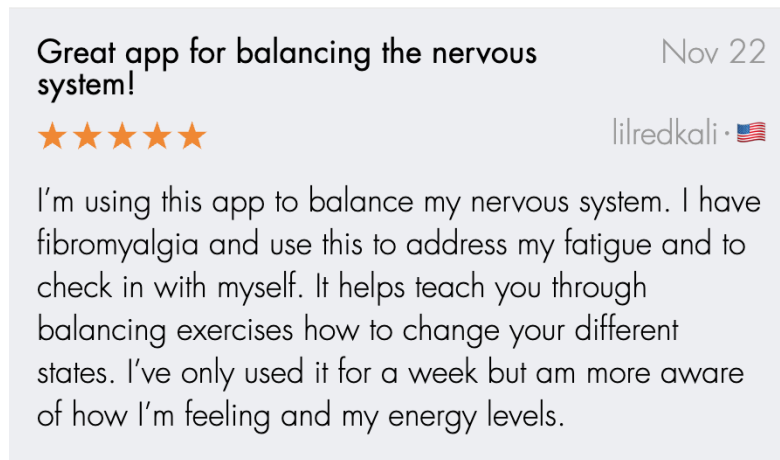
Before we dive into some ways you can balance your nervous system, we recommend pausing here and taking a moment to identify your energy type.

You can do that by taking a guess based on what's been shared here, and noting any personal patterns you have and whether you fall into more of the Dorsal Vagal or Sympathetic states during times of stress.

Alternatively, you can head to the “Key Takeaways” section of the NeuroFit App.

By understanding your natural Energy Type you begin to develop an awareness and understanding of what will serve your nervous system the best moving forward and you'll begin to understand the activities that you may have a natural aversion to that are actually really good for you and your nervous system.

As described by one of our Grounded Energy Members:



What you'll soon realize is that a dysregulated nervous system doesn't always tell truthful stories about the state of the world and how we are interacting within it. We call this "Resistance to Change" – and we're going to touch on a few elements of this before we discuss how you can balance your nervous system in just 5 minutes a day.

Resistance to Change: The Universal Human Phenomenon

The final piece of the puzzle we **MUST** address before we discuss how to balance your nervous system is this little thing that most people don't want to look at - *our innate, biological resistance to change*.

When we can understand this about ourselves and the nervous system and address this big elephant in the room, then we're more likely to experience the type of results you require (and desire). To get straight to the point:

The human nervous system is designed to crave familiarity.

This is what makes this work challenging despite its simplicity. What we often find with app members is not that it doesn't work, but rather, that the results come so quickly that their nervous system then puts up resistance when outdated perceptions and belief systems are called into question.

These stories often sound like, "healing is hard/complicated", "this is a lifelong affliction", and "there's something wrong with me".

In the Introduction to the book you may have noticed that we clearly stated who this book is for and who it is not for.

There's a good reason for that - it's only possible for a person to create change if they take full responsibility for doing so and for doing the work.

Without taking responsibility and action, they're wasting their time by reading this book so we let them know that upfront in the interests of saving time.

And in transparency, we have no desire for people to pay us if they're going to waste their own time.

The Three Truths around change are:

#1: A person in a dysregulated state is incapable of making positive changes in their life.

We firmly believe that true *change* in a *positive* direction can only come from a regulated nervous system that is either in Stillness, Play or the Ventral Vagal state.

Attempting to create change from Sympathetic, Overwhelm or Dorsal Vagal is a recipe for frustration, failure, and burnout.

This can be likened to trying to drive a car while the emergency brake is engaged.

#2: A person in a dysregulated state that does NOT want to change cannot be changed (while in their current state)

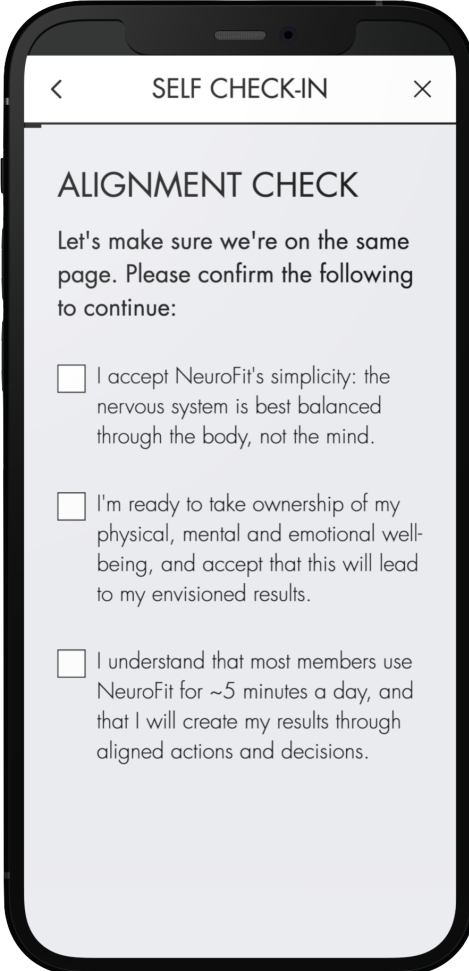
Positive, lasting change requires a *heartfelt desire or willingness to change*. Without the willingness and personal responsibility to change, it's near impossible for a person to shift and create a positive outcome for themselves.

As the old adage goes, *you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink*.

#3: A person with a regulated nervous system that takes full responsibility for their life will ALWAYS be able to create positive change

The first two truths lead to one conclusion - that positive change is always possible if a person takes full responsibility for making the change from a place of regulation.

Because we understand this about human behavior, and to ensure that our members are committed to creating tangible, positive change in their life, we've been deliberate about how we've designed the app. The Alignment Check is a perfect example of this:



< SELF CHECK-IN ×

ALIGNMENT CHECK

Let's make sure we're on the same page. Please confirm the following to continue:

- ☐ I accept NeuroFit's simplicity: the nervous system is best balanced through the body, not the mind.
- ☐ I'm ready to take ownership of my physical, mental and emotional well-being, and accept that this will lead to my envisioned results.
- ☐ I understand that most members use NeuroFit for ~5 minutes a day, and that I will create my results through aligned actions and decisions.

By agreeing to this, we know you're ready to make a change, you take full responsibility for the change and you'll work through whatever resistance may come your way as part of that process.

Signs & Symptoms of Resistance to Change

“How do I know if I’m resisting change?”, you may be wondering. Great question!

Here’s everything you need to know about Neurological Fitness and creating change.

First up, let’s start by stating something that’s going to be fundamental to how you approach the next chapter and the NeuroFit app - Neurological Fitness is *really* simple and it *really* works. *The data tells us that this is true:*

96% of people experience relief from feelings of stress within just one BALANCE session.

Our average member reports feeling 54% less stressed after just 7 days.

So why do people sign up for the app and then cancel their membership immediately, without doing ANY of the work?

In part, this is because the human ego is invested in its cherished stories and beliefs about the nature of reality. Here are some examples of internal beliefs you may encounter:

“Change cannot be that simple, because everything else I’ve tried has been complicated and hard”;

“People are out to try and con me, and these results cannot really be real”;

“If I believe that this will work for me and it doesn’t, I’ll just be disappointed again and I don’t want to experience that”;

“My problems are so unique that this solution cannot be so simple and effective”;

“If this truly works the way it does, this threatens an aspect of my identity or it’s a direct threat to my job/relationship/identity”.

We see this time and time again - people that are SO close to the breakthrough, and then self-sabotage when they’re just about to cross the line.

The irony is, we often see this from people that pride themselves on being rational and educated, yet refuse to accept that the path to feeling better in body and mind may be quite simple – in fact, a whole lot less complicated than they’ve been led to believe.

We share this with you sincerely because we don't want you to make the same mistake.

We want you to *cross the finish line* as you come up to it.

We want you to *change your life* and get the breakthroughs you desire.

We want you to *free yourself* from a lifetime of pain, suffering and challenges.

We want you to *thrive*.

And to be frank, if this direct approach bruises a few egos along the way and helps many more find peace in the process, we'll sleep well at night with that outcome.

So here's what we want you to keep in mind about resistance to change as we move into the next and most important chapter in this book:

- True transformation requires you to do more than just *read* about what needs to change. Changing the nervous system requires *action*. You'll need to physically *DO* the exercises we're going to share with you – even when you don't want to. This is the *fastest* path to change.
- If you are more dysregulated, then at first, you may require more than one balance exercise to shift back to a regulated state. This is normal, and it will get easier with time. Don't expect NeuroFit to solve a lifetime of dysregulation without putting in a reasonable amount of effort to experience change.
- It takes about six weeks for lasting changes in the nervous system. You will need to do this work *daily* even when you don't want to.
- Changing your life will inevitably lead to an ego and identity crisis of some sort. This will at times be emotional, challenging, uncomfortable. That is a sign you are heading in the *right* direction.
- Neurological Fitness will require you to let go of many internal stories you have about change, and how easy and simple it is to do so. Notice if any part of this book or app triggers discomfort in you. And instead of running away from the discomfort, we ask you to actively sit with it and uncover what lies beneath it.
- Understand that internal resistance is common. We *all* experience it as we approach the edges of our comfort zone.

It's also important to note what the symptoms of resistance to change look like (hint: they're kinda sneaky). Here are some behaviors and patterns we see that indicate resistance to change:

- Starting a membership on the app and canceling immediately without completing any check-ins or BALANCE exercises.
- Procrastinating and not completing the daily check-ins or BALANCE exercises.
- Not staying on top of daily check-ins and BALANCE exercises when you start feeling good (and self-sabotaging as a result).
- Making excuses for why there isn't time to complete daily check-ins and BALANCE trainings (the total time required each day is just 5 minutes for a reason)
- Telling ego stories such as “It can't really be this simple” or “I don't think this will actually work (for me)”.
- Having negative emotions surfacing that may have been repressed including anger, frustration, grief, fear, guilt and shame and refusing to look at them because “I don't have time for this right now”.

As you can see, the stories are endless because at the end of the day, there is a part within each one of us that is really scared of change.

Why?

Because change and the unknown send a signal of “DANGER” to the body and the nervous system. This is deeply rooted in our biology and is designed to keep us safe.

And it does a brilliant job of doing so.

But if you can understand this biological drive and resistance to change and recognize that change lies on the other side of a regulated nervous system, then you're well on the path to experiencing lasting change and peace. Ready to completely change your life? Let's get started in the next chapter...

Key Chapter Takeaways

By completing this chapter, you have now:

- Identified your natural “Energy Type”;
 - Identified some ways you can start to balance your nervous system within a few minutes, with NeuroFit BALANCE exercises; and
 - Learned how to identify and overcome the resistance to change that is biologically built into the nervous system itself.
-

Chapter Four: Five Minutes to Balance

We've all been there: you're at the end of your rope after a heated argument, and you feel the energy and heat of Sympathetic anger bubbling up inside of you. Or perhaps, there's a Dorsal Vagal response taking hold in response to some bad career news - and feelings of hopelessness or shutdown are coming on.

Or, perhaps it's both at the same time, and you find yourself completely overtaken in the Overwhelm state. No matter which one it is, these feelings of dysregulation are usually an unwanted and unpleasant experience.

Because 80% of the nervous system is afferent, the onset of real-time dysregulation can be experienced with great intensity and discomfort. And it's not something we can simply think (or mindset) our way out of either.

So what can be done in moments like these? The feelings seem to hang around forever – we've seen them ruin entire days, or even entire weekends.

Luckily, this is all about to change for the better. Instead of sitting around stewing in these unwanted feelings, we can simply perform a couple of BALANCE exercises.

In this Chapter you're going to learn:

- A simple and proven way to re-balance your nervous system in just a few minutes, from any dysregulated state; and
- How to handle Sympathetic activation, Dorsal Vagal shutdown, and Overwhelm based on your Energy Type.

These exercises focus directly on the nervous system – the source of the majority of these unwanted sensations and feelings – and go a long way in shifting the body out of dysregulated states. On average, 96% of our BALANCE Training sessions resolve feelings of stress, overwhelm, and dysregulation within about 5 minutes.

The cool thing about Neurological Fitness and BALANCE training is, the more often you do it, the better it works (the exercises reinforce new neural pathways geared towards self-regulation).

And you may be wondering at this point which exercise is best for you. The answer all depends on the current state of your nervous system, and your nervous system's energy type as you just discovered.

Know that the journey to re-balancing your nervous system may feel challenging at first – we highly recommend you stick with it until your nervous system responds. Because once you've re-balanced to a regulated state once, your body now has created the neural pathways that will make it easier going forward.

NOTE: This Chapter is where it's critical to move from “knowledge” to “embodiment” - you're going to be required to put this book down, head to the app and complete the BALANCE exercises in there.

So go ahead and:

- Identify which energy type you are;
- Notice what state you are in; and
- Then head to the app to complete one of the BALANCE exercises.

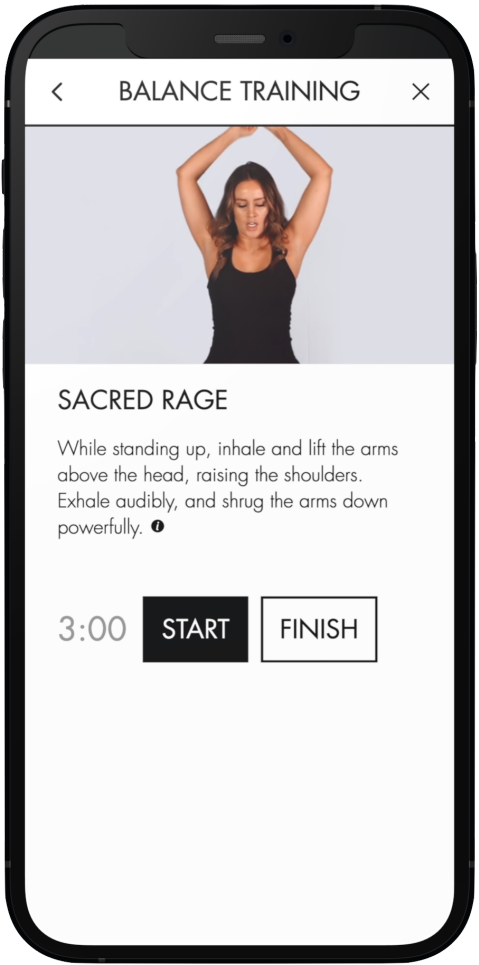
In order to understand the full effect of Neurological Fitness, you have to have a *subjective experience* of the process.

In the same way that imagining yourself doing a bench press or a squat at the gym won't build your muscles on its own, you'll need to do the BALANCE exercises themselves so that your body can experience the full benefit.

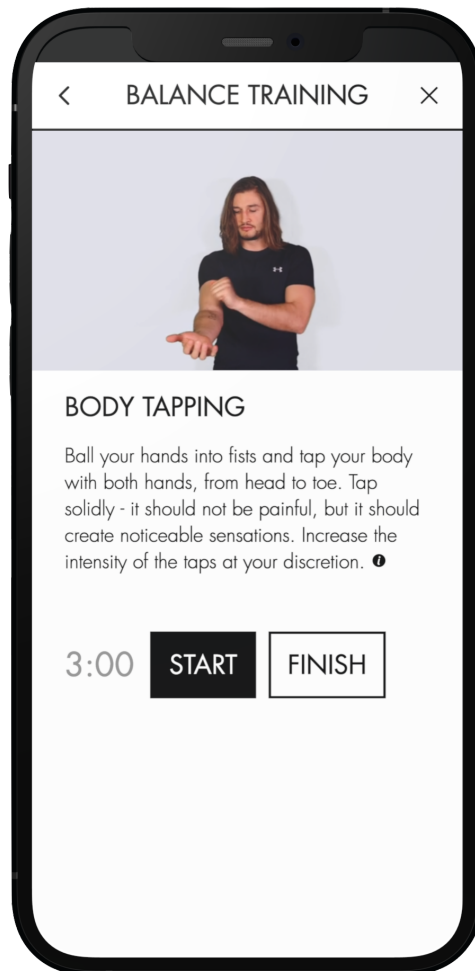
Example Exercises

We break down our exercises in the same way as Energy Types – High Energy, Balanced, and Grounding – based on the effect they have on the nervous system. For the purposes of this chapter, we've included one example of each kind of exercise that you can use to up-regulate, balance, or ground your nervous system. To access the full exercise library, and exercises tailored to your nervous system, head to the NeuroFit app.

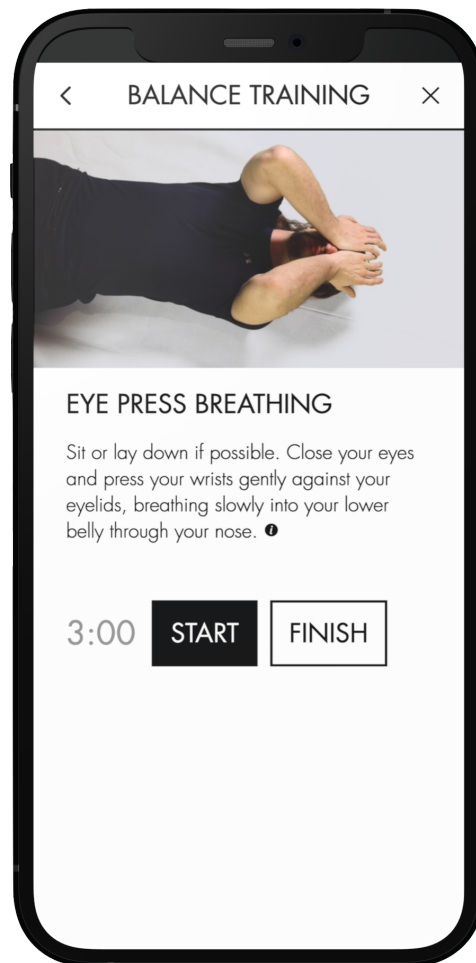
High Energy Exercise: Sacred Rage



Balancing Exercise: Body Tapping



Grounding Exercise: Eye Press Breathing



With these in mind, let's dive into the best kind of exercise for each combination of Energy Type (High Energy, Grounded, and Balanced) and Dysregulated State (Sympathetic, Dorsal Vagal and Overwhelm) below.

High Energy Members

1. Sympathetic

When those that are High Energy find themselves in Sympathetic state, the most effective approach has been Stillness-based exercises – and if needed, preceding it with a High Energy exercise first to release any excess energy or activation.

2. Overwhelm

When in the Overwhelm State, we've generally found High Energy exercises most helpful to High Energy members. Note that overwhelm can sometimes take multiple exercises to resolve due to its sheer intensity - stick with it if your nervous system needs more time, because the practice will only get easier as you continue on the journey.

3. Dorsal Vagal

When in Dorsal Vagal, our data shows that Stillness-based exercises are most helpful for High Energy members.

Balanced Members

1. Sympathetic

When Balanced Members find themselves in Sympathetic, our data shows that Ventral Vagal practices are the most effective approach.

2. Overwhelm

When Balanced Members find themselves in Overwhelm, Play (Activity-based) exercises are most effective.

3. Dorsal Vagal

When Balanced Members find themselves in Dorsal Vagal, Ventral Vagal or Stillness exercises are most effective.

Grounded Energy Members

Low Energy Members tend to also be the most disconnected from their body - so as a result, we recommend completing multiple exercises as necessary to re-balance the nervous system, in addition to daily social play and exercise.

1. Sympathetic

When Low Energy Members find themselves in Sympathetic, our data shows that Stillness practices are the most effective approach.

2. Overwhelm

When Balanced Members find themselves in Overwhelm, Balancing exercises are most effective.

Note: Overwhelm tends to take multiple exercises for Low Energy Members. As you complete daily training sessions, your nervous system will adjust accordingly.

3. Dorsal Vagal

When Balanced Members find themselves in Dorsal Vagal, Stillness or High Energy exercises are most effective.

Additional Tips

In addition to the above guidance, there are a few other considerations that will maximize the effectiveness of your training:

Play music: Music is a very powerful way to engage with the nervous system's neuroception and assist your transition during BALANCE Training. We even recommend creating playlists for each of the states on the NeuroFit Ring - as each person's music tastes and what works best for them will be very subjective.

Allow whatever emotions surface to come up fully: At times, your body may be releasing emotions somatically from the body - and this is a perfectly normal part of the process with nervous system regulation as we are clearing out old trapped emotions (commonly known as "somatic release"). Trust that this will pass - by the end of any somatic release, you will feel a newfound sense of peace and lightness.

Have a trusted loved one or friend perform the exercise alongside you: This actively engages the Social Nervous System, and is one of the most powerful ways to re-balance yourself, as your nervous system will automatically attune to the balance, openness and safety of the person you are training with. It may feel vulnerable to try this approach at first, but the reward when doing so with someone you trust is more than worth the leap.

Interactive Activity: Balance Your Nervous System

To experience the powerful effects of nervous system fitness firsthand, download the NeuroFit app by scanning the QR code below or heading to <https://neurofit.app>. There you can complete your first BALANCE training session.



Daily BALANCE Sessions are highly recommended when re-balancing the nervous system - they are great for resolving real-time stress, as well as helping the nervous system anchor into the Play, Stillness and Ventral Vagal states.

Beyond embodiment exercises that are best suited for the short-term, there are also longer term habits that will help establish a more balanced nervous system in the long term - we'll dive into this in the next chapter.

We'll close out this chapter with a case study from another of our Certified Trainers, who found relief for a long-standing Dorsal Vagal through these very exercises.

Case Study: Regine, Mindset Coach & Certified NeuroFit Trainer

When Regine joined the Certification program, she had just been through a big shift in her business and personal life, and was finding herself in an all-too-familiar state of depression and overwhelm, unable to shift out of these states for several months.

Even though she had learned all of the tools necessary to shift her mindset, she found that this time, the mindset work wasn't cutting it.

After about 3 weeks into the program and using the app, Regine began to notice a quiet yet profound rewiring of her nervous system, noticing that exercises such as Arm & Leg

Squeezes would quickly alleviate the Dorsal Vagal (Shutdown) State she'd previously been experiencing.

She noticed that the pervading feelings of overwhelm, shutdown and helplessness had quietly started to dissipate, and says that this shift "has improved my daily life immensely".

She says she now has a much better awareness of how to support herself and her body since starting to embody the principles of Neurological Fitness.

Chapter Five: Daily Habits that Support a Balanced Nervous System

Imagine you're trying to get physically fit for summer. Multiple times a week, you go to an exclusive gym and pay a top personal trainer to work out with you for an hour. The workouts are tailored to your body, and the trainer has worked with top athletes so it's clear they really know their stuff.

After a few months, your trainer is wondering why no results have turned up. And after digging a bit, he finds out that between training sessions, you go home and eat junk food, only get 5 hours of sleep a night and are often out partying until the early hours of the morning.

The above is intentionally exaggerated, but the point is this: proper daily habits, in addition to embodiment training, are what support a balanced nervous system in the long term and create lasting results. And this is because our nervous system is designed to constantly be taking in data and adapting itself to our environment (referred to as “neuroception”) as well as our own inner state (referred to as “interoception”).

Without the proper daily habits in place, we do ourselves a disservice when it comes to:

- Optimizing our performance at work or in our business;
- Optimizing our workouts and recovery;
- Turning up as the best version of ourselves when we need it the most; and
- Being fully present and engaged with the people we love.

So if there is anything we want to leave you with in this chapter, it's this:

- BALANCE exercises is a fundamental part of regulating your nervous system.
- Your daily habits that you follow consistently will play just as important a role in keeping you grounded, regulated and performing at your best.
- With the NeuroFit App, you can track the main habits that influence the nervous system each day, and pinpoint which habits have the biggest impact on your nervous system.

For simplicity, we break these daily habits into 3 main types

- EMBODY Habits,
- PREVENT Habits, and
- NOURISH Habits

Now, it may be tempting to skip over this section because it's simple in essence, but remember - *knowing* something is very different from having *mastered and embodied* it.

With that in mind, let's explore the key daily habits that support a healthy and regulated nervous system.

EMBODY Habits

EMBODY Habits are the basic embodiment habits that you want to keep an eye on daily. These are the habits that your body requires in order to function properly, and these habits engage our afferent nerves (think: from body to brain) to shift the nervous system towards greater balance.

Every nervous system requires 4 embodiment ingredients in order to be regulated and functioning properly:

- Exercise
- Stillness
- Social Play
- Consistent Evening Bedtime Routine

How Exercise Supports a Balanced Nervous System

We recommend that you exercise for at least 10 minutes a day, to the point of breaking a sweat. On average, NeuroFit members who prioritize exercise report 22% higher HRV and 11% more balanced check-ins.

Exercise is especially important for the Grounded Energy Type, which is more susceptible to the Dorsal Vagal State and dissociation, and therefore benefits from physical movement and activity.

The numerous benefits of exercise include:

- Releasing endorphins and serotonin in the body, which have mood-boosting and pain-relieving effects, and help to relieve stress and anxiety.
- Preserving the health of the brain and increasing the levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which is a protein that helps to promote the growth and survival of neurons. BDNF is essential for learning and memory.
- Reducing inflammation, which can damage the nerves.

- Improved blood flow and increased levels of antioxidants in the body, both of which are important for the health of the nervous system.
- Improved sleep quality, which facilitates a nervous system that's more capable of repairing and re-balancing itself.

How Stillness Balances the Nervous System

A daily stillness practice is a powerful means for building nervous system balance and teaching the body how to switch off.

Some of the main benefits include:

- Improved resistance to the Dorsal Vagal response.
- Greater ease in falling asleep.
- Higher sleep quality.
- Feeling more grounded during stressful situations.

This is why we recommend that you incorporate at least 10 minutes of Stillness a day into your routine. On average, members who prioritize daily Stillness report 27% more balanced check-ins and 5% higher HRV.

How Social Play Supports Greater Balance

When it comes to managing stress, play may seem like the last thing that would help.

But research shows that play has numerous benefits including:

- Improved resistance to the fight-or-flight response.
- Increased access to creativity.
- Improved emotional balance, and resistance to anxiety and fear.
- Remaining open and able to improvise during stressful situations.
- Feeling more safe and balanced in social situations.

What can play look like as adults? Examples of social play include:

- Joining a casual sports team.
- Taking an art class with a group of friends.
- Doing something fun and adventurous with a partner.
- Hitting the beach or going for a group hike.

Effectively, anything socially oriented that increases nervous system activation allows us to balance between Ventral Vagal and Sympathetic.

On average, members who prioritize daily Play report 26% more balanced check-ins.

The Power of a Regular Bedtime Routine

A consistent bedtime routine is essential for a balanced nervous system, because it supports a predictable and consistent circadian rhythm.

The NeuroFit data supports this - on average, NeuroFit members who prioritize a proper bedtime routine report 5% higher HRV.

There are a few things to keep in mind when creating a sleep routine that will support a balanced nervous system. Here are some of our top tips:

- First, it is important to establish a regular sleep schedule. This means going to bed around the same time each night. If you use an iPhone, you can actually set a Sleep & Wakeup schedule inside the Alarm App. This allows you to receive a reminder to ensure you wind down in time.
- Second, it is important to create a relaxing environment in your bedroom, free from distractions like electronics. Avoiding blue light close to the time you go to sleep will ease this transition.
- Third, it is important to avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed. Both of these substances can disrupt the body's natural sleep-wake cycle.
- Fourth, it's important to avoid eating close to bedtime. If no energy is diverted towards digestion during sleep, the nervous system will be much more capable of repairing itself leading to a replenishing night's sleep.
- Finally, it helps to prepare for sleep by winding down with activities that shift the nervous system into stillness, such as meditation, slow breathing techniques, reading, or taking a bath.

By following these simple tips, you can create a bedtime routine that will facilitate consistent sleep patterns, and support greater balance in the nervous system.

PREVENT Habits

The next set of habits we look at are PREVENT Habits - these are common habits you want to avoid, because they are detrimental to the nervous system and actively detract from its overall balance.

The PREVENT Habits you want to keep an eye on are:

- Avoiding eating too close to bedtime;
- Avoiding alcohol and substances;
- Avoiding social fatigue; and
- Avoiding online stress;

Let's look at the stats and some daily tips for monitoring these key habits.

Avoid Eating Late to Balance the Nervous System

This simple change of avoiding eating before bed can lead to noticeably more restful sleep, leaving one feeling noticeably more refreshed each morning. This rest accumulates to support a much more balanced nervous system.

On average, NeuroFit members who prioritize avoiding late-night eating report 6% more balanced check-ins.

When we eat late at night, our body has to work harder than usual in order to both digest food and repair itself. This can lead to rest that is less than replenishing and imbalance in the nervous system, and often then leads to feelings of grogginess or fatigue when waking up the next morning.

This is why NeuroFit recommends that you eat your last meal of the day at least 3 hours before going to bed. This will give your body time to digest, and ensure you get optimal rest that supports nervous system balance.

Alcohol, Substances, and the Nervous System

Chronic use of alcohol and other substances can cause damage to the nervous system. This damage can be both physical and chemical. Physical damage can occur to the cells of the nervous system, as well as to the connections between these cells.

Chemical damage can occur when substances alter the balance of neurotransmitters in the brain - the chemicals that transmit messages between nerve cells.

In the short term, this often manifests as decreased HRV, a reduced NeuroFit Balance Score, and increased shutdown and fatigue responses. This is because alcohol is a depressant. It also impairs the body's ability to properly repair itself during sleep, which leads to a nervous system that then needs to work harder to repair itself.

If consumed chronically, alcohol increases allostatic load - the overall stress levels on the nervous system. This can lead to all sorts of second-order problems, where the nervous system becomes chronically dysregulated.

When seeking to reduce overall stress levels and find balance in everyday life, this is why reducing alcohol and substance use is key.

When looking to limit alcohol consumption, the EMBODY habits listed above are helpful in doing so – as they help preempt many of the triggers that often precede drinking.

Emotional Contagion: Why We Feel Tired Around Some People

The social nervous system is designed to automatically absorb others' emotions – and this is why practicing discernment in your interactions with others is so important.

It's important to understand that social fatigue is *real*, it does affect the nervous system (our in-app data shows this) and it's a state of exhaustion that can be caused by exposure to too much social interaction.

This can lead to feelings of irritability, anxiety, or depression, and can result from constantly being around other people, such as in a crowded city, or of being exposed to negative emotions on a regular basis.

On average, NeuroFit members who prioritize avoiding social fatigue report 14% more balanced check-ins and 10% higher HRV.

Here are some tips for preventing social fatigue:

- Write a list of the people who you interact with frequently and who you feel stressed or anxious around and limit your time spent with them.
- Limit your exposure to negative emotions and interactions that do not feel nourishing. Excuse yourself where needed, and cancel plans that feel tiring to think about.
- If you know that you're going to be around people who are stressed or anxious, try to reset your nervous system with a BALANCE exercise before and after.
- Finally, give yourself time to relax and recharge, away from other people.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by social interaction, it's important to take steps to avoid social fatigue. By doing so, you'll be able to better protect your health and well-being.

How Online Stress Impacts the Nervous System

Finally, as mentioned above, your nervous system attunes to others' emotions – so it's equally as important to be discerning when consuming online content.

One of the biggest sources of online stress is emotional contagion. This is when our nervous system absorbs the emotions of others, often without us even realizing it.

For example, if you view someone on social media discussing a stressful event, you may start to feel stressed yourself. This is because your nervous system is automatically reacting to the emotions of the person you're watching.

The challenge is that it can be difficult for us to discern if we're the one feeling the emotion or whether we have "caught" it from someone else – and we're more likely to experience negative emotions online than positive ones, because emotions like fear and anger spread more quickly online.

So how can we prevent online stress? Here are some tips that you can implement immediately:

- One of the best things you can do is to take a break from the internet and social media. If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a few minutes (or even a few hours) to

disconnect from the online world. This will give your nervous system a chance to relax and reset.

- You can also try to be more mindful of the content you're consuming online. Make an effort to seek out positive and uplifting content, and avoid negativity as much as possible. This will help you to keep your own emotions in check and avoid getting overwhelmed by the emotions of others.
- Remove all social media and email apps from your phone to limit the temptation to check them and scroll endlessly.

On average, NeuroFit members who prioritize avoiding online stress report 22% more balanced check-ins.

NOURISH Habits

In this final section we're going to explore the key NOURISH Habits that nourish, support and sustain our body and nervous system. This includes:

- Sleep quality
- Water intake
- Diet quality
- Prioritizing peace

Let's jump into a quick overview of each of these habits, and some of our recommended tips for optimizing each area.

Sleep + Nervous System Recovery

Proper sleep is the bedrock of a balanced nervous system.

It helps us to:

- Manage our stress level.
- Keeping stress hormones like cortisol low.
- Support a strong immune system.
- Cleanse toxins from the brain and nervous system, ensuring proper functioning.

There is strong correlation between sleep and nervous system balance – members who report high quality sleep report 34% more balanced check-ins and 11% higher HRV.

Hydration + the Nervous System

Most of the body is made up of water - and the nervous system is no different.

Proper hydration helps the body filter out unneeded substances and toxins and reduces inflammation. On the contrary, dehydration leads to increased Sympathetic nervous system activity.

Members who prioritize proper water intake report 17% more balanced check-ins.

How Diet Can Help Balance the Nervous System

With diet, our first recommendation is to avoid inflammation from sugar and processed foods when possible - as this affects proper nervous system function and can lead to mood imbalances.

Additionally, there are key nutrients that support nervous system balance:

- Omega-3 Fatty Acids (found in fish + avocados) support proper brain development+function.
- Vitamin B12 also supports the creation of myelin which is the insulating layer of nerve cells.

Finally, 96% of serotonin is produced in the gut – so keeping your gut microbiome in balance with proper diet and probiotics lends itself to better digestive function and improved emotional balance.

Our app data suggests that diet and nervous system balance are highly correlated: NeuroFit members who prioritize a healthy diet report 30% more balanced check-ins + 10% higher HRV.

Peaceful Nervous System, Peaceful Mind

When the mind and body are at peace, the nervous system is also at peace - as the two influence each other in each and every moment.

Peace can be facilitated by tapping into the afferent nervous system via embodiment, exercise, social play and stillness practices.

We can also support greater peace in our lives by minimizing unnecessary stressors and triggers.

By minimizing sources of stress and activation, we spend more time anchoring into the Ventral Vagal rest and digest state.

The more time we spend in rest and digest, the more the neural pathways of peace become reinforced, and as a result, peace becomes reinforced as our natural state of being.

Key Chapter Takeaways

- Proper daily habits, in addition to embodiment training, are what support a balanced nervous system in the long term.
 - These daily habits can be ordered into 3 main types:
 - EMBODY Habits which include exercise, stillness, social play and a consistent bedtime routine.
 - PREVENT Habits which include avoiding eating too close to bedtime, avoiding alcohol and substances, avoiding online stress and avoiding social fatigue.
 - NOURISH Habits which include monitoring sleep quality, water intake, diet quality and choosing peace.
-

Chapter Six: What's Next?

We trust we've made a few things in this book really clear, namely that:

- Your nervous system plays a fundamental role in determining how you experience life and the world around you;
- A dysregulated nervous system contributes to a number of physical, mental and emotional imbalances
- It's possible to develop a healthy, regulated nervous system by reducing stress, balancing the nervous system daily and by practicing habits that support your health; and
- Your nervous system is the key to enjoying lasting peace in your body and it shapes all key areas of your life from love and relationships to career, health and your finances.

Our hope with this book was to teach you 90% of what you need to know in order to regulate your nervous system daily.

So you may be wondering “*What's next?*”

For this next phase of your journey it's time to graduate from an intellectual understanding of the nervous system and truly *embody* this knowledge.

This is going to require daily commitment, applied action and finding a path that works for your unique nervous system.

If you do so, you'll find that the path forward is simple and that the results will be life-changing.

Thank you for joining us. It's been a pleasure.

Loren & Andrew Hogue

Next Steps

Complete Your 6-Week Protocol Inside the NeuroFit App

If you've already decided to begin the work of balancing your nervous system daily and developing habits that support you in doing so, you can head to <https://neurofit.app> and download the app, or you can scan the QR code below:



Become a Certified NeuroFit Trainer in just 3 weeks

Our 3-Week Nervous System Certification is built for trainers, gym owners, coaches and health practitioners looking to accelerate personal and professional growth with Neurological Fitness.

Become Certified in just 3 weeks and learn how to:

- *Master the fundamentals of nervous system regulation and Neurological Fitness*
- *Lead with your nervous system, by embodying balance, play, and grounding as a Neurological Fitness Trainer*
- *Help your clients reduce stress and feel noticeably better in their body in just a few weeks*
- *Create an additional revenue stream in your business via group workshops and 1:1 Neurological Fitness training*
- *Bring Neurological Fitness to the mainstream market, alongside a growing movement of NeuroFit members and trainers*

To enroll in the Certification and become a NeuroFit Trainer, scan the QR Code below or head to <https://neurofit.app/certification>



Workshops & Speaking

If you want to book us for your next corporate workshop or have us speak at an event, please head to <https://neurofit.app/workshops> and get in touch with us.

Thank you.

About the Authors

Loren & Andrew Hogue, developers of the world's leading nervous system regulation app, NeuroFit, are deeply passionate about developing tech tools and products that improve the human experience.

Loren Hogue

Loren holds a Bachelor of Law/Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Western Australia. She's a former attorney and Master Coach having worked with thousands of clients globally, and following an acute family tragedy, has spent the last 10 years identifying the best ways to heal childhood trauma, PTSD and nervous system dysregulation.

She teamed up with her husband Andrew in 2021 to launch Xama Technologies and their first product, the NeuroFit app. She is now the head of Brand and Marketing.

Andrew Hogue

Andrew majored in Computer Science at the California Institute of Technology, and has spent the last 10 years creating humanity-first technology. He is now the Head of Product and primary developer at NeuroFit.

Neurological Fitness has helped Andrew overcome Complex PTSD stemming from decades of nervous system dysregulation. Growing up in a highly neurodiverse home (including autism, bipolar disorder, anxiety, and depression) has shaped his inner fervor to relieve human suffering and support the health and well-being of others.