

# UNDERSTANDING THE GUT & VAGUS NERVE: I HAVE A GUT FEELING..

## Tools to Stimulate the Vagus Nerve

Here is your guide to selecting the regulatory tools:

- Each person experiences emotions differently. Each person's vagal tone fluctuates on a day-to-day basis. While some strategies may work for some, they may not work for others. With that in mind, let's take a look at the list carefully and create your own toolkit to help you increase the vagal tone and regulate the mind and body.



- When engaging in grounding activities gets difficult, **allow yourself to use your body and start with simple exercises just as yawning, snapping your fingers, wiggling your fingers or toes, and soft head movements as you look up & down for at least 10-15 minutes.** It might be difficult to bring in mobility, but gradually the body will be back in motion.

## Here are some regulatory tools you can use to stimulate your vagus nerve:



- **Name and describe objects that you see** around you out loud. You could also name objects of a specific color/form. If you are outside of your house, you can count the number of cars/taxis passing by. You could count the number of trees or shops around you as well

- Closely focus on & name different **sounds that you** hear around you

- **Smelling something** pleasant/strong: It could be camphor, clove, a food item, and the likes



- Stand under the fan (fast speed) or air conditioner where you can **feel the air on your face**

- Apply a body lotion or moisturiser starting with the palms, and arms, and through the body. Try applying the lotion as slowly as you can as you feel your **palms make contact with different parts of the body**



- **Splash** cold/warm **water on your face** as you'd prefer or you can gently wash your face and feel the sensation

- Try holding the **ice in the centre of your palm**, you can move it around your face, hands, and legs to feel a cooling sensation or if you'd prefer you can also eat the ice



- Connect with your body by **wrapping your arms** around you as you hug yourself

- **Hug something soft** - a pillow, soft toy, or anything that is comforting for you



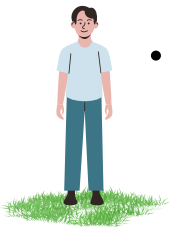
- **Massage** your face

- **Move your mouth** (yawning, as if a cow is eating, or merely just opening and closing it)



- **Stretch your body** - you can do this either in a seated or a standing position

- **Lengthen your arms** forward, make sure not to bend the elbow, and move them in and out as if you were playing the piano. Make sure to **wiggle all your fingers** as you open your arms widely and bring them inwards



- Stand on the ground with bare feet and notice whether your body weight is on your heels or toes and consciously align it by centering the distribution of the weight on your feet. **Notice how firmly your feet are planted on the ground**

- **Rub your palms** together gently. Change the pressure of your touch each time

- Try **singing or humming**

- Focus on **exhaling slowly or rapidly** out through the mouth



- **Bounce a ball** against a wall/ground for a few minutes

- **Listen to music** - instrumental or with lyrics. Pick your music. However, one suggestion - instruments such as harp, piano, and flute can be really calming

- **Dance** - try doing this slowly



- Connect with your **safe people/places**

- Spend some **time in nature**/pets/water bodies/ mountains

- **Walk as slowly** as you can, focusing on one step at a time.

- Look at the trees and try to **spot different flowers and birds**. Notice and look closely at the different types of greens/other colours you see.

- **Hug a tree, water some plants**, you can also talk to them.

- Take a **nice hot or cold water bath** - making it a mindful practice as you notice the water touch your body and trickle off.

- Savour a **piece of chocolate** - sour, sweet, or dark - pick your choice.



- Take **10 deep breaths** - in through the nose as you lengthen your spine and out through the mouth as you slowly come to a neutral position.



- **Try laughter**. Just let yourself loooooose and lauuuuugh as if no one is watching/listening to you.

[Watch the video for Understanding the Gut & Vagus Nerve: I have a gut feeling... here](#)