



My Window of Calm Guide

2020-1-UK01-KA201-079268

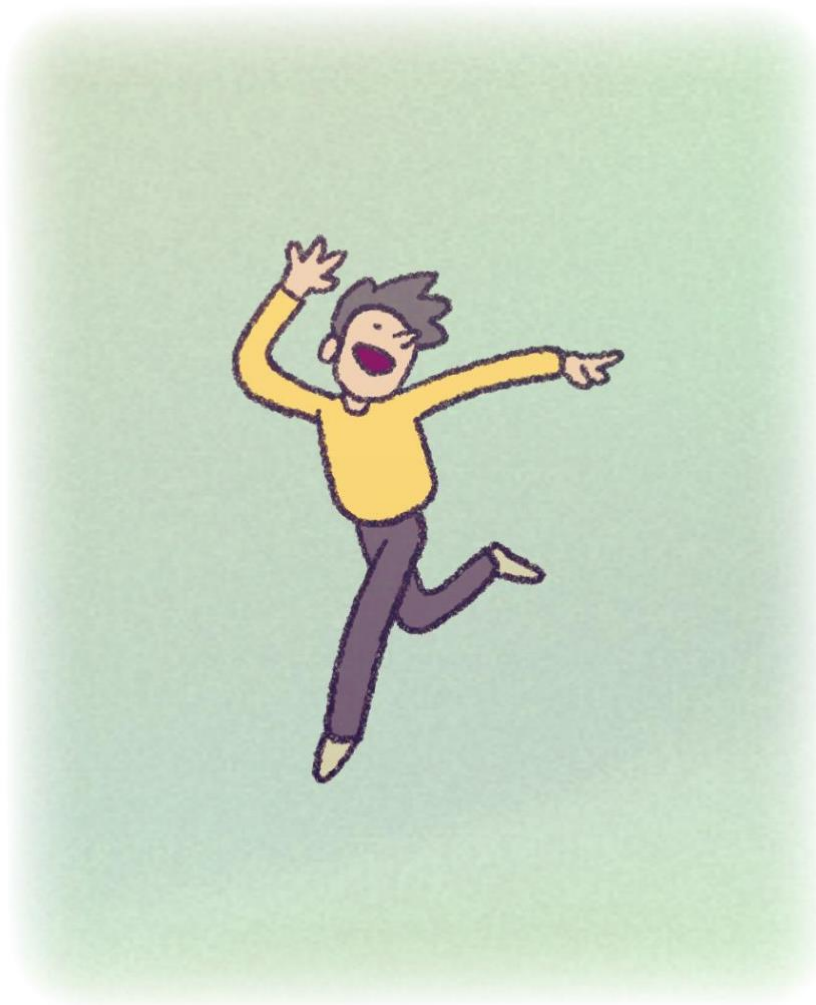




Sand play is considered to be nervously regulating because it has a calming and therapeutic effect on the mind and body. When playing with sand, individuals are encouraged to use their senses and engage in tactile exploration, which can help to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation. The repetitive motions involved in scooping and pouring sand can also have a meditative quality, allowing individuals to focus their attention on the present moment and distract from negative thoughts or feelings. Additionally, sand play is often used as a form of play therapy, particularly for children, as it provides a safe and non-judgmental space for them to express themselves and process difficult emotions.



Drumming has long been recognised as a powerful nervous system regulation tool. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of drumming activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which calms the body and reduces stress. This is because the consistent beat of the drum creates a sense of predictability and stability, which can help to counteract feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. In addition, drumming requires a degree of focus and concentration, which can help to quiet the mind and promote relaxation. Drumming in a group helps individuals who struggle to trust in connection connect. Whether drumming alone or as part of a group, this ancient practice has been shown to have numerous physical, emotional, and psychological benefits, making it an effective tool for managing stress and promoting overall well-being.



Dancing is an excellent way to regulate the nervous system and promote feelings of calm and well-being. When we dance, our bodies release endorphins, which are natural feel-good chemicals that can reduce stress and improve mood. Additionally, dancing involves physical movement, which can help release tension and decrease muscle stiffness, particularly in the neck, shoulders, and back. Dancing promotes a sense of connection and community, often involving social interaction and shared experiences. The rhythmic and repetitive movements of dancing can also have a calming effect on our nervous system, like deep breathing and meditation.



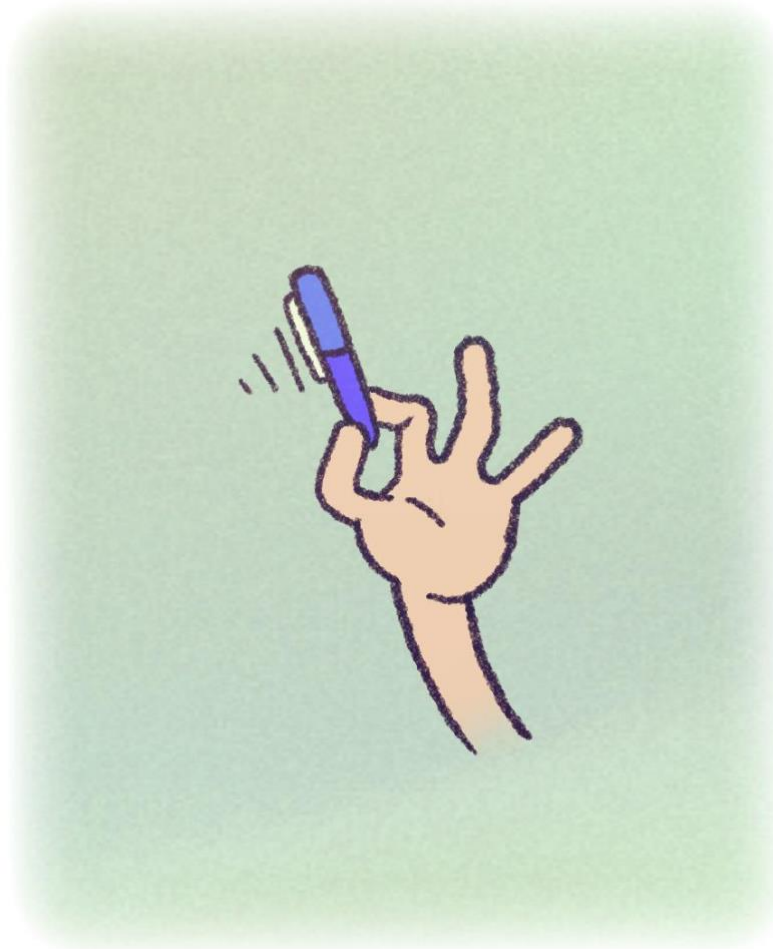
Being in nature has a nervously regulating effect on our minds and body. Studies have shown that spending time in green spaces, such as forests, parks, and gardens, can reduce stress levels, lower blood pressure, and improve mood. This is because exposure to nature triggers our parasympathetic nervous system, the part of our nervous system we use when calm which is responsible for slowing down our heart rate and breathing and promoting relaxation. Being in nature allows us to disconnect from the distractions of modern life, such as technology and urban environments, which can contribute to feelings of anxiety and overwhelm. Nature provides a calming and rejuvenating experience for our nervous system, helping us to feel more centred and balanced.



Havening, also known as the "self-hug" technique, has been shown to be an effective way to regulate the nervous system. Havening involves using alternate hands to grasp one's arms below one's shoulders and making stroking motions upwards. Doing this action creates a sense of comfort and safety, which can help calm the body and reduce anxiety and stress. This repetitive touch can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes relaxation and reduces stress. In addition, the act of hugging oneself can promote a sense of self-care and self-compassion, which can further reduce stress and promote overall well-being. Havening is a simple and effective tool that can be used anytime, anywhere, making it an ideal technique for regulating the nervous system on the go.



Eating a healthy diet is key to regulating the nervous system. The foods we eat can directly impact our mood, energy levels, and overall sense of well-being. A diet rich in whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, can help to provide the necessary nutrients and vitamins that support a healthy nervous system. In addition, a healthy diet can help regulate blood sugar levels, significantly impacting our mood and energy levels. Eating a balanced diet can also reduce inflammation in the body, which has been linked to anxiety and depression. Making healthy food choices can promote self-care and a sense of control over one's life. Eating is a great way to reduce nervous dysregulation as it triggers the parasympathetic nervous system. Eating with others is a connective experience where experiences can be shared and support can be found.



Bilateral stimulation, or "tapping therapy," is a nervous system regulation technique that can help reduce anxiety, stress, and trauma symptoms. The technique involves tapping alternately with a pen or fingers on both sides of the body, such as tapping on the left knee and then the right knee. When we are triggered, we are right-brain dominant, so bilateral stimulation can return a nervously dysregulated individual to a regulated state. The bilateral stimulation helps to activate both sides of the brain and can promote a sense of calm and relaxation. This technique is based on the idea that it can help to reprocess and desensitize traumatic memories or emotions in a regulated state, making them less intense or distressing. The rhythmic tapping also serves as a form of distraction, redirecting attention away from negative thoughts or emotions. And is a handy tool for those who need help to stay focused.



Music is considered to be nervously regulating because it has the ability to affect our emotions and our nervous system. Studies have shown that listening to music can lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol while also increasing the production of feel-good neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin. A song's rhythm, melody, and lyrics can all work together to create a sense of calm and relaxation while providing an outlet for expressing and processing emotions. Additionally, music can distract us from negative thoughts or feelings, allowing us to focus on the present moment and reduce anxiety or nervousness. Playing music in a group promotes an individual's capacity for connection with others, and singing promotes presence and reduces emotional dysregulation. Singing can also be used as a mindfulness practice.



Meditation is nervously regulating because it can help calm the mind and promote relaxation and inner peace. When practicing meditation, individuals are encouraged to focus their attention on the present moment, often through the use of breath awareness or guided imagery. This can help to reduce anxiety and stress, as well as improve concentration and cognitive function. Additionally, regular meditation practice has been shown to have a range of physical and mental health benefits, such as reducing blood pressure, improving sleep, and promoting emotional regulation.



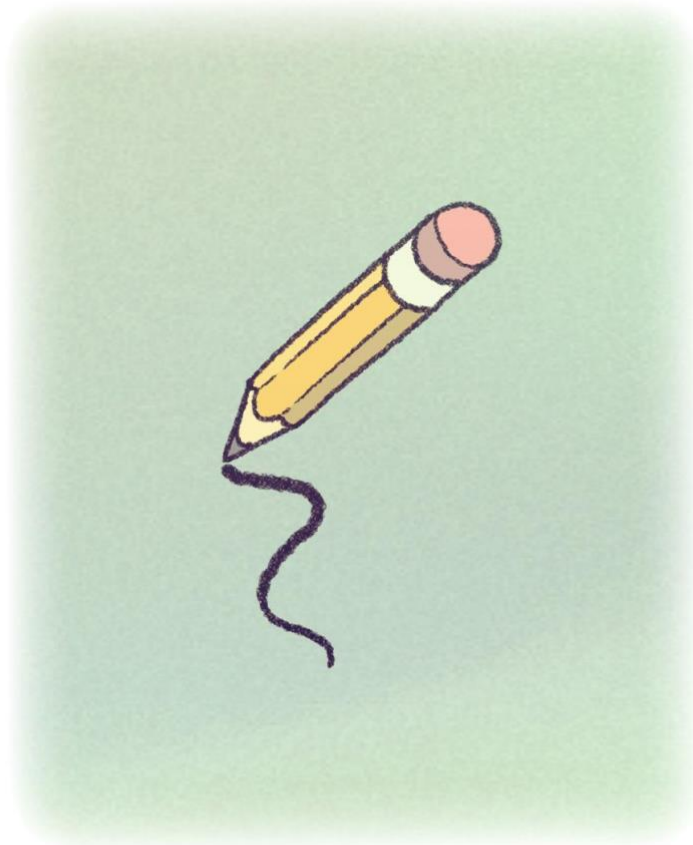
Jumping is nervously regulating due to the release of endorphins and the promotion of overall physical health it produces. Jumping, whether on a trampoline or simply jumping jacks, causes the body to release endorphins, which are natural chemicals that produce a sense of pleasure and reduce pain. This can result in a sense of well-being and reduce feelings of anxiety or depression. Additionally, jumping can promote cardiovascular health, increase lung capacity, and improve coordination and balance, all contributing to a healthy nervous system. The physical exertion required to jump can also help reduce stress and promote relaxation, similar to how other forms of exercise can regulate the nervous system. And it's fun!



Playing with animals has a calming effect on the nervous system. Interacting with animals, whether petting a dog or playing with a cat, can release oxytocin, a hormone associated with feelings of pleasure and social bonding. This release of oxytocin can help to reduce stress and anxiety and promote a sense of calm and relaxation. Playing with animals can provide a sense of companionship and social support, which can be especially helpful for individuals who may feel isolated or lonely. Animal-assisted therapy is a recognised form of therapy that has been used to help individuals with various mental health conditions. Having an animal can increase an individual's sense perceived sense of safety and connection to areas which are often affected by Developmental Trauma.



Yoga is a form of exercise that is particularly effective for regulating our nervous system and promoting relaxation and stress relief. Yoga incorporates various physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation, all working together to calm the mind and body. Studies have shown that practicing yoga can lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol while also increasing the production of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA). This neurotransmitter promotes feelings of relaxation and calm. Yoga also promotes mindfulness, which can help reduce rumination and negative thought patterns contributing to anxiety and stress. The deep breathing techniques used in yoga also help to slow down the heart rate, which has a calming effect on the nervous system. Yoga trains individuals to relax in the presence of a group which, if done frequently, can, through neuroplasticity, help reduce social anxiety.



Drawing is nervously regulating for the mind and body as it promotes a state of mindfulness and relaxation. The reason for this is when we draw, we focus our attention on the present moment, which can help to quiet our thoughts and reduce stress levels. Drawing can also be a form of self-expression, allowing us to process and release emotions in a non-verbal way. The act of drawing is meditative, with the repetitive movements of the pencil or pen promoting a sense of calm and relaxation. Creating art can also empower us to take control and make something beautiful out of chaos or negative emotions.



Reading regulates the nervous system and promotes relaxation. Becoming absorbed in a good book can shift focus away from stressful thoughts and allow the mind to unwind. Reading has been shown to reduce heart rate, lower blood pressure, and decrease muscle tension, all of which are signs of a relaxed nervous system. Reading offers a sense of escapism, allowing individuals to mentally transport themselves to another world and temporarily forget about their problems. This can help reduce anxiety and promote a sense of calm. Reading can also stimulate the imagination and enhance cognitive function also.



Walking is an excellent way to regulate the nervous system as it provides bilateral (two-sided) stimulation to the body. Bilateral stimulation refers to the rhythmic and repetitive movement of both sides of the body, which has the capacity to combat triggering or nervous dysregulation. When we walk, we engage both the left and right sides of the body, activating the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomic nervous system, helping to balance our emotional and physiological responses. Additionally, walking outside in nature has been shown to enhance the benefits of bilateral stimulation, helping reduce anxiety and improve mood.