

## HUMMING OR CHANTING



Choose a low tone like “mmm” or “om” and hum through your exhale.

Feel the vibration in your throat, chest, and face.

Continue for one minute of steady sound and breath.



Close your eyes to reduce sensory input and amplify internal calm.

# Vagus Nerve Exercises

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## COLD WATER SPLASH



Splash face with cold water for 30-45 seconds.

Breathe calmly as the water touches your face.



This activates the mammalian dive reflex, slowing heart rate and stimulating the vagus.

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## NECK & EYE RELEASE



Slowly move eyes side to side (without moving your head), pausing for 5 seconds at each end.

Next, tilt your head slightly right, breathe in; tilt left, breathe out.



Finish by softening your gaze and let your eyes rest on the periphery of the room, noticing safety in your surroundings.

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## LEGS UP THE WALL



Lie on your back with legs resting up a wall or chair.

Let arms fall open, palms up.

Focus on slow exhalations. Continue this pose for 2-3 minutes.



The position supports venous return and engages baroreceptors that feed into the vagus nerve.

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## BUTTERFLY HUG



Cross your arms so your right hand touches your left upper arm and vice versa.

Tap alternately—left, right, left, right—slowly and rhythmically

With each tap, say internally: "I'm safe, I'm present." Continue for 1 minute.



This engages bilateral stimulation and parasympathetic grounding.

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## STRAW BREATHING



Inhale normally through the nose.

Exhale through a straw, twice as long as the inhale.

Repeat for 8-10 breaths.



The slight resistance increases CO<sub>2</sub> tolerance and signals the vagus to slow respiration and heart rate.

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## GARGLING WATER



Gargle with warm water for 30 seconds.



Activates throat muscles connected to the vagus; consistent practice increases tone in this pathway.

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## TONING VOWEL SOUNDS



Sustain "Aaaah," "Eeee," and "Oooo" for 10 seconds each.

Cycle through for 1-2 minutes.



These long vowels produce broad vibratory resonance that reaches cranial nerves IX and X (glossopharyngeal and vagus).

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## COLD FACE SUBMERSION



Fill bowl with cold water.

Submerge or press against your face for 15-30 seconds while breathing calmly.



Triggers the mammalian dive reflex: heart rate drops, vagal tone rises, body enters energy-conservation mode.

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## CAT-COW WITH BREATH



On hands and knees, inhale as you arch (cow), exhale as you round (cat).

Continue for one minute.



Diaphragmatic motion and spinal fluid rhythm stimulate vagal communication with abdominal organs.

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## SNIFF BREATHING



Take two quick nasal sniffs to expand the belly, then a slow exhale through the mouth.

Repeat 10 times.



Strengthens diaphragmatic movement and reinforces vagal input from the respiratory system.

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## GUA SHA/FACIAL MASSAGE



Using a smooth tool or fingers, stroke gently behind ears, along jawline, and down neck.

Continue 1-2 minutes.



Stimulates the auricular and cervical branches of the vagus; improves lymph flow and relaxation.

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## ABDOMINAL MASSAGE



Place a hand on your abdomen and move in slow clockwise circles for 2-3 minutes.



Follows the path of digestion, enhancing gut motility and vagal signaling between intestines and brain.

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## AURICULAR ACUPRESSURE



With thumb and forefinger, massage the tragus and inner ear bowl for 30-60 seconds.



These zones are innervated by the auricular branch of the vagus; gentle stimulation boosts parasympathetic tone.

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## TONGUE ROOT STRETCH



Stick out your tongue fully, hold for five seconds, release.

Repeat five times.



The tongue's root shares neuromuscular pathways with the vagus; stretching it engages those reflexes.

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## ICE PACK



Take an ice pack wrapped in a towel and hold it to your face, neck, or chest for 15 seconds up to 20 minutes.



Stimulates facial cold receptors, triggering the dive reflex, which increases vagal tone, reduces heart rate, and promotes calm.

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## QI GONG INNER SMILE



Close eyes, bring a slight smile, and “send” that warmth to your heart, lungs, and abdomen.

Hold 2–3 minutes.



Visualization plus gentle facial engagement recruits vagal relaxation and emotional coherence.

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## LAUGHING



Begin with forced laughter (“ha-ha-ha”) for 30 seconds—let it become genuine if it can.



Laughing alternates diaphragm contraction and relaxation, producing a mini massage of the vagus.

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## RESONANCE BREATHING



Inhale through your nose for 5.5 seconds

Exhale slowly through your mouth for 5.5 seconds

Continue this rhythmic pattern for 2 minutes



Imagine your breath sweeping through your heart center. This synchronizes heart and breath rhythms for optimal vagal tone.

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