

Your Autonomic Nervous System

Qualities/Activities of the Parasympathetic State—the rest and digest state!

Regeneration
Relaxation
Processing of nutrients and metabolic waste
Healthy digestion and bowel function
Increased absorption of nutrients
Healthy tissue regeneration
Better circulation of blood and lymph
Less muscle tension
Decreased blood pressure
Decreased heart rate

Qualities/Activities of the Sympathetic State—the fight or flight response!

Decrease in healthy body secretions (digestive, reproductive, urinary, pulmonary, etc.)
Decreased digestive function
Decreased assimilation of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients
More tension in the musculoskeletal system
Decreased reproductive function and health
Constricted capillaries and blood vessels, leading to poor circulation
Increased heart rate
Increased blood pressure
Decreased oxygen in blood and to organs and muscles
Decreased sensory perception
Decreased mental clarity
More likely to become agitated, frustrated, angry, impatient, or anxious
Eventual adrenal and energy depletion—exhaustion
Poor-quality sleep or general sleep disturbances
Fatigue
Headaches

Support for the Nervous System

Parasympathetic Support

~Activities that reduce brain waves to the alpha state (10 waves per second): meditation, being outside in nature, walking, yoga, chanting, tai chi, prayer, massage and body work, stretching, deep breathing into the diaphragm, and being mindful, grateful, and conscious
~Having a regular routine that supports whole body and whole life balance
~Oil massage anytime and especially before a shower or bath
~Bath/sauna—warm therapies that promote relaxation and detoxification
~Relaxing teas: oats, lavender, linden, chamomile, passionflower, skullcap, etc.

Sympathetic Irritation—avoid these things as much as possible!

- ~Skipping meals, overeating, eating while driving or while involved in intense conversation, eating while using the computer or watching TV
- ~Dehydration—make sure to drink enough water
- ~Lack of sleep, especially deep and restful sleep
- ~Emotional or physical stress or abuse
- ~Suppressing emotions
- ~Substance abuse, including consumption of alcohol, caffeine, and sugar
- ~Feelings of guilt, fear of not being good enough
- ~Overworking or being chronically overstimulated—not knowing when to switch off, not having enough down time
- ~Being cold for long periods
- ~Sitting for long periods—chronically tight muscles