

A GRACEFULLY STRONG MINI GUIDE

The Gentle Nervous System Reset

A calm, practical 7-day beginning after illness, prolonged stress, or trauma

Small signals. Gentle rhythms. No forcing.

Inside this free guide

Five grounding practices, a simple daily rhythm, a 7-day tracker, thoughtful safety guidance, and a clear next step when you are ready to go deeper.

Written by Batyah

FREE DOWNLOAD • 2026 EDITION



BEGIN HERE

You are not failing at rest

When a body has carried too much for too long, even ordinary life can feel loud.

After a viral illness, chronic symptoms, prolonged stress, or a frightening experience, you may notice that your body remains watchful: sleep is lighter, digestion changes, your heart races, your muscles brace, or fatigue arrives suddenly. These experiences deserve proper medical assessment. Alongside that care, gentle regulation practices may help you notice moments of steadiness and comfort.

This guide is not a promise to “reset” your body in seven days. It is a compassionate experiment: a way to discover which small, low-effort signals feel settling for you.

Your only goal

Choose one or two practices. Keep them comfortable. Stop if a technique makes you dizzy, distressed, breathless, painful, or more activated.

A gentle promise to yourself

“I will listen before I push. I will measure progress in moments of ease, not perfection. I will seek help when my symptoms need more than self-care.”

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Read it once without trying to do everything.
- Circle the two practices that feel safest and simplest.
- Try each for 30–90 seconds at first.
- Use the tracker to notice patterns without judging them.

Your alarm system is protective

The nervous system constantly adjusts breathing, heart rate, alertness, digestion, movement, and rest.

Stress responses are not character flaws. They are protective patterns. After illness or threat, some people feel keyed-up and restless; others feel slowed, foggy, or shut down; many move between both. These descriptions can be useful, but they are not diagnoses.

A more accurate aim

Rather than forcing your body into one “perfect” state, practise flexibility: noticing activation, finding a small anchor, and returning to the present with support.

WIRED / MOBILISED	HEAVY / WITHDRAWN	CONNECTED / STEADIER
Racing thoughts Muscle tension Restlessness Startle response	Low energy Numbness Brain fog Wanting to retreat	More choice Easier breathing Curiosity Some social ease

Try this reflection

Right now, do I feel more wired, more heavy, or somewhere in between? What is one small sign that tells me so?

There is no wrong answer. Naming what is present can create a little more choice.

The 5-4-3 gentle orienting practice

A present-moment practice for reconnecting with the room around you.

Before you begin

Sit or lie somewhere supported. Keep your eyes soft. If looking around feels unsafe, choose one steady object instead.

5

Look
Name five neutral or pleasant things you can see.

4

Feel
Notice four points of contact: feet, back, hands, clothing.

3

Hear
Let three sounds come to you without searching.

2

Soften
Unclench two places by only five percent.

1

Choose
Name one kind thing you need next: water, warmth, quiet, food, help, or rest.

Finish with: "I am here, in this room, in this moment." You do not need to convince yourself that everything is safe. Simply notice what is true now.

A comfortable longer exhale

Breath can influence arousal, but more is not always better.

A small study comparing brief daily breath practices found that exhale-focused cyclic sighing was associated with improved mood and a lower respiratory rate. It does not follow that forceful or repeated deep breathing is right for everyone.

The gentlest version

Breathe in normally through your nose. Let the exhale become slightly longer, as if softly fogging a mirror. Repeat only 3 times, then return to ordinary breathing.

OPTIONAL: THE PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGH

- Take one comfortable inhale through the nose.
- Add a small second sip of air - never strain.
- Release one slow, easy exhale through the mouth.
- Pause and notice. One to three rounds may be enough.

Please stop

Stop if you feel dizzy, tingling, air hunger, panic, chest pain, or discomfort. Do not use breathwork to manage new or severe breathing difficulty; seek medical help.

MY COMFORTABLE PACE

Inhale: _____ counts Exhale: _____ counts Rounds: _____

Sound, warmth, and supportive touch

Choose sensory cues that your body already associates with comfort.

LOW HUM	Hum softly on an easy exhale. Notice vibration in the lips, throat, or chest. Stop before the breath runs out.
WARMTH	Hold a warm mug, wrap in a blanket, or rest a heat pack safely over clothing. Let warmth be information, not a test.
HAND TO HEART	Place one hand where touch feels neutral or supportive - chest, cheek, upper arm, or abdomen. Gentle pressure only.
RHYTHM	Rock slowly, walk at an easy pace, or tap alternate thighs. Predictable rhythm can feel organising for some people.

A note about eye-position and neck “vagus resets”

Some popular exercises involve holding the head or eyes in fixed positions until a yawn or swallow occurs. These responses do not prove that the vagus nerve has been “reset.” If you try any neck or eye exercise, keep the movement pain-free and stop with dizziness, visual symptoms, headache, or neck discomfort.

My easiest sensory anchor is: _____

A brief, choice-based tapping script

EFT may help some people with anxiety, but the evidence is still developing.

Use fingertips to tap lightly on one point at a time. You may use the side of the hand, collarbone area, outer upper arm, or thighs. Skip any point that feels uncomfortable. The words should feel believable - not forced.

NOTICE	“My body is carrying a lot right now.”
ALLOW	“I do not have to solve everything in this minute.”
ORIENT	“I can feel the chair / floor supporting me.”
CHOOSE	“One small act of care is enough for now.”
CLOSE	“I will listen for what my body needs next.”

If words make it harder

Tap slowly without a script, count 1–10, or simply hold a comforting object. Regulation is not a performance.

A three-anchor daily rhythm

Consistency can be helpful; intensity is optional.

MORNING	ARRIVE	Before messages or tasks: notice three things in the room, take one easy exhale, and ask, "What pace is kind today?"
MIDDAY	CHECK	Notice wired / heavy / steadier. Drink or eat if needed. Choose 60 seconds of orienting, humming, tapping, or supported rest.
EVENING	SOFTEN	Lower stimulation where practical. Add warmth, a familiar sound, or a slow exhale. Let sleep come without trying to guarantee it.

The two-minute minimum

On a difficult day, your whole practice may be: feet supported, one ordinary breath, one sip of water, and one text asking for help. That still counts.

Pacing question

After this activity, do I feel the same, gently steadier, or noticeably worse? If symptoms reliably worsen later, reduce the dose and discuss post-exertional symptom worsening with a qualified clinician.

My morning anchor: _____

My midday anchor: _____

My evening anchor: _____

Steady nourishment without rigid rules

Food can support general health, but no single diet “switches off” a stress response.

When energy is limited, prioritise foods you tolerate, regular hydration, and enough nourishment. Individual needs vary widely - especially with allergies, gastrointestinal illness, diabetes, kidney or heart conditions, eating-disorder history, and post-viral syndromes.

A SIMPLE PLATE IDEA

- A tolerated protein or protein-rich food.
- Colour and fibre from vegetables or fruit you tolerate.
- A source of fat and/or carbohydrate that suits your body and health plan.
- Water or another suitable fluid alongside.

Keep it personal

Fermented foods, bone broth, caffeine, high-histamine foods, fasting, and restrictive diets are not universally helpful. Track your own response and seek individual advice where symptoms are persistent.

Herbs and supplements: pause before adding

“Natural” does not mean risk-free. Herbs can cause side effects, interact with medicines, affect the liver or thyroid, and be unsuitable during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Evidence for claims that herbs “repair” the nervous system is limited. Check each product with a pharmacist, doctor, or suitably qualified herbal practitioner who knows your conditions and full supplement list.

Especially important: ashwagandha has documented cautions, including rare reports of liver injury and potential thyroid and medicine interactions.

YOUR 7-DAY EXPERIMENT

Notice, do less, learn

Use one practice consistently enough to learn from it. This is observation, not a pass/fail test.

DAY	BEFORE (0-10)	PRACTICE	AFTER (0-10)	ONE NOTE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Rate activation, discomfort, or overwhelm - choose one measure and use the same measure all week.

At the end of seven days

- Which practice felt most accessible?
- What time of day suited me?
- Did anything consistently make symptoms worse?
- What support would make the next week kinder?

Safety beside gentleness

Self-care should complement - not replace - appropriate assessment and treatment.

Seek urgent medical help for new or severe chest pain, significant breathing difficulty, fainting, signs of stroke, severe confusion, a sudden “worst” headache, uncontrolled bleeding, a serious allergic reaction, thoughts of harming yourself, or any symptom that feels immediately dangerous. In New Zealand, call 111 in an emergency.

Arrange clinical review for persistent palpitations, unexplained weight loss, worsening neurological symptoms, prolonged fever, severe fatigue, recurrent fainting, significant changes in function, or symptoms that are new, worsening, or difficult to explain.

Trauma-sensitive care

Body-focused practices can sometimes bring up fear, intrusive memories, numbness, or panic. You may keep your eyes open, shorten the practice, move instead of becoming still, have a trusted person nearby, or work with a trauma-informed professional.

A simple support plan

Person I can contact: _____

Clinician / service: _____

What helps me feel more supported: _____

My reason to stop a practice: _____

This guide provides general education only and is not medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It cannot account for your personal history, conditions, medicines, supplements, pregnancy status, or individual risks.

CONTINUE GENTLY

The fuller journey: Gracefully Regulated

This free guide is the doorway, not the whole house.

The planned companion book will help women build a personal, whole-life recovery rhythm without turning healing into another exhausting job.

PLANNED INSIDE THE FULL BOOK

- Understanding activation, shutdown, pacing, and the window of tolerance.
- Post-viral fatigue and energy budgeting, including how to spot delayed symptom worsening.
- Sleep rhythms, sensory support, and low-energy evening routines.
- Nourishment frameworks that respect individual tolerance and different dietary paths.
- A careful complementary-support chapter: herbs, supplements, interactions, and questions to ask.
- Gentle movement ladders and how to adapt them when exertion worsens symptoms.
- Printable trackers, flare-day plans, appointment notes, and a personalised 30-day rhythm.

The promise of the next book

Not a miracle cure. Not a rigid protocol. A beautifully structured companion for learning your patterns, choosing safer supports, and building a life that makes room for recovery.



You do not need to rush your way back to yourself.

COMING NEXT FROM BATYAH • GRACEFULLY STRONG

NOTES

Evidence & careful wording

A short reading list for the practices and cautions included here.

1. Balban MY, et al. Brief structured respiration practices enhance mood and reduce physiological arousal. Cell Reports Medicine. 2023;4(1):100895. doi:10.1016/j.xcrm.2022.100895.
2. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH). Anxiety and Complementary Health Approaches. Notes that some evidence suggests EFT may reduce anxiety, while more research is needed.
3. NCCIH. Relaxation Techniques: What You Need To Know. Relaxation practices are generally safe, but some people report increased anxiety, intrusive thoughts, or other adverse experiences.
4. NCCIH. Ashwagandha: Usefulness and Safety. Includes pregnancy, breastfeeding, thyroid, medicine-interaction, and rare liver-injury cautions.
5. NCCIH. Mind and Body Practices. General safety guidance and the importance of not postponing needed health care.

Editorial note

This edition intentionally avoids claims that a particular exercise directly “resets” the vagus nerve, that a food blocks vagal signalling, that an herb repairs nerve tissue, or that any routine guarantees sleep. Those statements go beyond what can responsibly be concluded from current human evidence.

Free sharing

You may share the complete, unchanged PDF with friends or family. Please do not remove the author credit, extract pages for resale, or present the health information as personal medical advice.

© 2026 Batyah • Gracefully Strong
Educational resource • First edition