



How to Calm Down Your Nervous System

LANE COVE
CHIROPRACTIC

OK, so you've been told that you're showing signs of an imbalance in your nervous system called sympathetic dominance, where the "fight/flight" response has become hypersensitive.

Your chiropractor will be adding in some specific adjustments to improve the overall balance and symmetry of your spine and nervous system. As well as that, here are some things you can do to help yourself:

POSTURE CORRECTION EXERCISES

Lie on your back with a rolled-up towel between your shoulder blades. Let the points of your shoulders and your head drop towards the floor for at least 5 minutes a day. More is fine, too.

STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

If you're currently going to the gym, focus your work on spinal extension exercises, such as rowing, dead lifts and Olympic lifting variations – cleans, squats, snatches, etc. Cut back on anything that tightens your chest, such as bench presses and push-ups.

RED LIGHT

Blue light (such as from computer and TV screens) is fast, short wavelength light. It is more stimulating than slow, longer wavelength red light. Buy a cheap pair of sunglasses with tinted pink, red or brown lenses to wear when working on a computer or watching TV. If you get more wound-up towards the end of the day, wear them after about 5pm, whether you're in front of a screen or not.

REDUCE NOISE

Avoid loud environments wherever possible and/or use earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones to reduce auditory input to the mid-brain.

SUPPLEMENTS

Magnesium (a trace element important for nervous system function) and Withania (a herb which helps support adrenal and nervous system function) can be helpful for some people. Ask your chiropractor about whether it's right for you.

REGULAR EXERCISE

Bodies love to move. Physical exercise mimics the exertion of being "chased by a tiger" and helps our nervous system to return to a more relaxed state. Exercise for at least 30 minutes on more days than you don't.

FOOD AND DRINK

Reduce your intake of sugar, starchy carbohydrates like grains, rice and pasta. Cut back on caffeine.

MEDITATION

Google "MARC free meditation" or look for phone apps to help you unwind and relax.

What Is Sympathetic Dominance?

Our lives are moving faster than ever before. We're bombarded with information and there are seemingly constant demands on our minds and bodies.

Our nervous systems aren't set up to deal with it all - and our bodies are paying the price for constant exposure to this unnatural level of input.

YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Your nervous system can be divided up into various parts. Your brain and spinal cord form your central nervous system. The nerves that branch off the central nervous system are divided into two types:

1. somatic nerves: which control conscious movement and sensation
2. autonomic nerves: which control the body's automated functions like digestion, sleep, immunity, reproductive capacity, etc.

The autonomic nervous system can be further divided into two parts:

- sympathetic nervous system, responsible for the fight/flight response, and
- parasympathetic nervous system, responsible for rest, digestion and relaxation.

The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems should work in harmony to allow the body to respond appropriately to what goes on around it and inside it.

As a result of stress load and postural habits, we're seeing more and more cases of **sympathetic dominance** leading to a wide range of symptoms, such as:

- Rounded shoulders
- Forward head posture
- Tight shoulders
- Restless leg syndrome
- Difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep
- Headaches that get worse over the day and decrease with rest
- Light and noise sensitivity
- Poor digestion: bloating, constipation and irritable bowel symptoms, etc.
- High blood pressure
- Increased perspiration
- High blood sugar
- Elevated heart rate
- Feelings of tension, depression, anxiety or sadness
- Altered thyroid function
- infertility, polycystic ovaries, uterine fibroids, etc.
- Precursors to auto-immune disorders such as psoriasis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, Parkinson's disease and other degenerative neurological conditions
- Symptoms of hormonal imbalance, such as endometriosis

If you've been noticing any of these or similar symptoms, talk with your chiropractor today about how we can help you and what you can do to help yourself. If you know someone experiencing these symptoms, please encourage them to talk with us too.

* Much of this information comes from Dr Wayne Todd, DACBN, chiropractor. Wayne is one of our great friends and mentors and we're grateful for his work in this area. It's no exaggeration to say that it really is life-changing.