

# RELAXATION TIPS

## Breathing Exercises | Neuropsychology | Meditation

### Diaphragmatic Breathing

Find a comfortable position sitting or lying down with your knees bent or supported. Gently place your hands on your stomach. Take a deep, slow breath in through your nose. Your belly should be extended. Then slowly exhale through your mouth as if you were blowing out birthday candles and contract your abdominals to get all the air out.

Tip: Focus more on the exhale than the inhale

Tip: You can add a short pause at the top and bottom

Tip: Check out my Instagram Reels for a guided version (@drcarolinevetter)

### Meditation

Meditation is a wonderful way to practice relaxation and activate your parasympathetic nervous system to strengthen your vagus nerve.

Guided meditation is a great place to start. My favorite app for this is called Insight Timer.

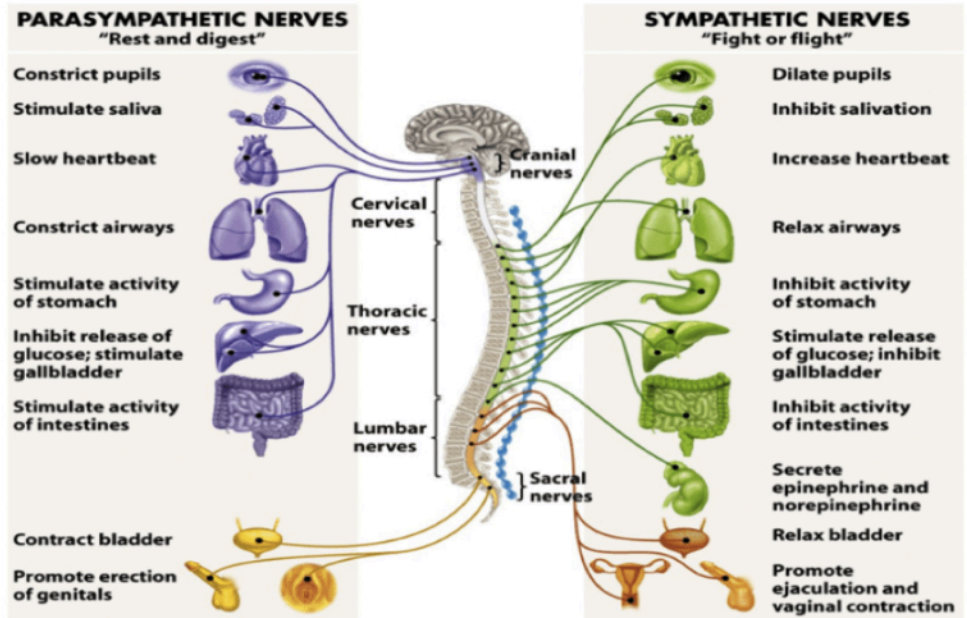


Figure 45-20 Biological Science, 2/e  
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### What is happening in your brain & body?

We have two systems in our body that get activated under different circumstances. The parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) and the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS). The PNS is responsible for helping us relax, rest and digest. The SNS is responsible for helping us avoid danger/harm by activating our body for fight/flight/freeze/faint. Our nervous system does not differentiate between a real life threatening event and a perceived threat, either way it activates our SNS so that we can be protected. If we are anxious about something we perceive a threat and our SNS gets activated. This is why anxiety is so exhausting!

To help combat anxiety we need to help our body activate the PNS. Yes you heard that right, we can practice activating our own nervous system! We can practice this activation through various activities, and over time build the habit of staying calm in the face of anxiety provoking situations. A couple activities that help engage the PNS are diaphragmatic breathing and meditation.