



A Gentle Guide for Recovery from Trauma, Stress, and Burnout

If you have gone through intense stress or trauma, it is common for the body and mind to feel overwhelmed, exhausted, or emotionally unstable.

You may notice things like:

- deep fatigue
- anxiety or feeling constantly on edge
- emotional numbness
- difficulty concentrating
- poor sleep
- feeling easily overwhelmed

These reactions are not signs that you are weak or failing.

They are signs that your **nervous system has been under too much pressure for too long.**

Your body is trying to protect you and recover.

Healing begins when we gently help the body **feel safe again and allow stored stress and trauma to release gradually.**

1. What Is Happening in Your Nervous System

Your nervous system is designed to protect you.

When the body senses danger or intense stress, it automatically moves into survival mode.

1. Fight or Flight
The body becomes alert and ready for action. You may feel anxious, restless, irritable, or unable to relax.
2. Freeze
The body feels stuck or overwhelmed. You may feel mentally foggy or unable to make decisions.
3. Shutdown (Burnout)
After long periods of stress, the body may move into exhaustion, numbness, or deep fatigue.

If trauma or stress has been ongoing, your nervous system may still be acting as if danger is present, even when you are safe.

Recovery is about helping the body **slowly come out of survival mode and return to balance.**

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2. Stabilizing Your Day with Simple Structure

When the nervous system is overwhelmed, too many decisions can increase stress. A gentle daily structure helps the body feel safer.

Morning

Wake up at roughly the same time each day. Do breathing exercises.

As soon as possible after waking, step outside and allow natural sunlight to reach your eyes for a few minutes.

Morning sunlight plays an important role in regulating the body's circadian rhythm, which is the internal clock that controls sleep, energy, hormone balance, and nervous system regulation. Light entering the eyes signals the brain that a new day has begun. This helps regulate hormones such as cortisol and melatonin, which influence alertness during the day and restful sleep at night. When this rhythm becomes balanced, the nervous system tends to feel calmer and more stable.

If possible, combine this with a few minutes of barefoot walking outside on grass, soil, or natural ground.

This practice, often called grounding, allows the body to come into direct contact with the earth. Many people find that this simple connection with nature helps reduce stress, release tension, and promote a sense of calm in the body. Gentle walking also activates the body's natural movement systems, which can help shift the nervous system out of stress mode.

Even 5–10 minutes of morning sunlight and grounding can help the body begin the day in a more balanced state.

Midday

Do breathing exercises

Evening

Slow down the pace of the day. Reduce screen time, dim lights, and allow your body to wind down.

Do breathing exercises

Sleep

Try to go to bed at a similar time each night. Deep rest allows the body to repair and regulate itself. If you struggle to fall asleep, hold an ice cube or two in each hand just before you turn off the light to go to sleep.

You do not need to do this perfectly. Consistency matters more than perfection.

3. Simple Ways to Calm the Nervous System

These small practices help signal to your body that it is safe.

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Slow Breathing

Inhale slowly through your nose for about four seconds.
Exhale slowly through your mouth for about six seconds.

A longer exhale helps the body move out of stress mode.

Grounding

Look around the room and slowly notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

This helps your brain reconnect with the present moment.

Cold Water Reset

Splash cold water on your face or hold something cold in your hands (an ice pack works well).
This can quickly calm an activated nervous system.

4. Supporting Your Body Physically

Trauma affects the whole body, not only the mind.

Hydration

Drink water with minerals regularly throughout the day.

Nutrition

Try to eat simple, nourishing meals. Your body needs fuel to recover.

Gentle Movement

Slow walks, stretching, or gentle movement can help release stress stored in the body.

Sunlight

Daily sunlight supports mood, sleep, and nervous system balance. It also helps the body to produce Vit D.

5. Allowing Emotions to Move

Trauma can cause emotions to become trapped in the body.

As healing begins, emotions such as sadness, fear, anger, or frustration may surface.

This is a normal part of the body releasing stored stress.

Instead of fighting the feeling, gently acknowledge it.

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You might say to yourself:

“This feeling is allowed to move through me.”

When emotions are allowed to move, they often pass more easily.

6. Reducing Overload

When your nervous system is already overwhelmed, too much stimulation can make symptoms worse.

Consider limiting:

- excess news or social media
- too many obligations
- emotionally draining conversations
- overly busy environments

Protecting your energy is an important part of healing.

7. Rest Without Guilt

Burnout means your body has used more energy than it has had time to restore.

Rest is not laziness.

Rest is necessary for recovery.

This might include:

- taking naps
- sitting quietly in nature
- listening to calming music
- doing something simple that feels comforting

Your body may need more rest than usual while it heals.

8. Staying Connected to Safe People

Healing happens more easily when we feel supported.

If possible, stay connected to at least one safe and supportive person.

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This could be a friend, family member, counsellor (we offer counselling sessions, visit our website for more info), or trusted guide.

Even simple, calm connection can help the nervous system settle.

9. What to Do During a Panic Wave or Emotional Flashback

Trauma can sometimes trigger sudden waves of fear, panic, or emotional overwhelm.

When this happens, your body may feel as if the past is happening again.

If this occurs, try the following steps.

Step 1 – Remind yourself where you are

Say quietly:

“I am safe right now. This feeling will pass.”

Step 2 – Slow your breathing

Breathe slowly with a longer exhale.

Step 3 – Ground yourself in the present

Look around the room and name objects you can see.

Step 4 – Move your body gently

Stretch, walk slowly, or shake out your hands.

These steps help signal to your nervous system that the danger is no longer present.

10. Where Trauma Gets Stored in the Body

Trauma and chronic stress are not only stored in the mind. They can also become stored in the body.

Common places where people hold stress include:

- the shoulders and neck
- the jaw
- the chest and breathing muscles
- the stomach and digestive system
- the hips and lower back

When the body begins to heal, these areas may release tension through:

- deep sighs
- tears

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- shaking
- muscle relaxation
- emotional release

These responses are often part of the body letting go of stored stress.

11. A Simple 10-Minute Daily Nervous System Reset

When the day feels overwhelming, focus on this small daily practice.

Step 1 – Breathe slowly for two minutes

Slow inhale through the nose, longer exhale through the mouth.

Step 2 – Gentle movement for three minutes

Stretch your arms, roll your shoulders, or walk slowly.

Step 3 – Ground yourself for three minutes

Notice what you can see, hear, and feel around you.

Step 4 – Quiet rest for two minutes

Sit quietly and allow your body to settle.

Even a few minutes of intentional calm can help your nervous system begin to regulate again.

12. Healing Happens in Small Steps

If you have experienced deep or long-term trauma, healing rarely happens all at once.

It happens gradually.

Some days will feel lighter and some days may feel heavy again.

This does not mean you are going backwards.

It means your body is slowly processing what it has carried for a long time.

Be patient and gentle with yourself.

Feeling Stressed, Exhausted, or Running on Empty?

Many people push through stress for so long that they no longer recognize how much it is affecting their health, emotions, relationships, and daily life.

Burnout doesn't happen overnight. It develops gradually as the body and nervous system remain under pressure for extended periods of time.

You may find yourself constantly tired, overwhelmed, emotionally drained, struggling to

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concentrate, feeling disconnected from the things you once enjoyed, or unable to fully rest—even when given the opportunity.

While stress management techniques can be incredibly helpful, they do not always address the deeper factors that may be contributing to burnout.

Unresolved emotional stress, nervous system dysregulation, chronic overwhelm, hidden burdens, and other underlying stressors can continue to keep the body trapped in a cycle of exhaustion and survival mode.

At Healthy Vibes, we help clients identify potential root causes, uncover hidden stressors, and develop personalized strategies to support physical, emotional, and nervous system recovery.

If you're tired of simply surviving and are ready to understand what may be contributing to your stress and burnout, our [New Clients Start Here](#) package is designed to help provide clarity, direction, and a personalized plan for moving forward.

Contact Us

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We would be honoured to walk alongside you on your journey toward greater health, healing, and restoration.

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