

How can we thrive?

See this month's lead-o-meter results on page 2!

Monthly Breakdown

The 'Where': Lead-o-meter

Week 2

The 'What': Self-Assessment Exercise

The 'Why': Research, Science and Information

Week 4

The 'How': Building up your skill

So, what have we learned this month?

We started off this month by identifying our stress triggers and taking note of when they happen, the emotions we feel, what beliefs might be contributing to our reaction, and where in our body we feel the impact. An increased awareness of our stress triggers is invaluable in learning how to cope more effectively, and how to reduce the stress response in our mind and body.

We also applied what we learned by completing a [ReCharge Stress Journal](#) in Week 2, and mapped out our nervous system in Week 3. *Let us know if you found these tools helpful!*

We then introduced Dr. Stephen Porges' **Polyvagal Theory** and learned how our vagus nerve and nervous system are intimately connected. In fact, they're so connected that "the vagus nerve is involved in nearly every physiological action in the human body and harnessing its power can have an immediate and dramatic impact on your well-being."¹

Among an abundance of metaphors, the

vagus nerve is often described as:

- A **superhighway** in your body that transports vital information between your brain and the rest of your internal organs;
- A **symphony conductor** that directs how fast, slow, loud, or quiet your nervous system will be at any given time; and
- An **air traffic controller** that monitors a multitude of moving parts to make sure all of the physiological airplanes fly safely and efficiently to their destination.²

By understanding the vagus nerve, we are also learning that ***we can make a significant difference in our nervous system state***. We can take ownership of what's happening in our body by tuning into what's happening and knowing how to regulate our emotions and responses to stress.

This is how we develop our **resilience**: by being able to respond appropriately to life's challenges. If we go to our fight-or-flight state, we should only stay for a short period as needed and then return to our safe and social engagement state.

This should only happen a few times a year, not multiple times a day as many of us are likely experiencing now. Returning to your state of safety – where you are mindful, grounded, and joyful – is a practice, and one that is essential for truly enjoying life.

Next month, we will learn cognitive and physical techniques for how to do just that: return to our safe state.

There have been many studies done involving the stimulation of the vagus nerve to see its impact on chronic conditions. From electrical stimulation to physical stimulation, the findings to date have been

encouraging. Until next month, if you would like to try some **techniques to physically stimulate your vagus nerve**, check out the following three videos.

WATCH THIS!

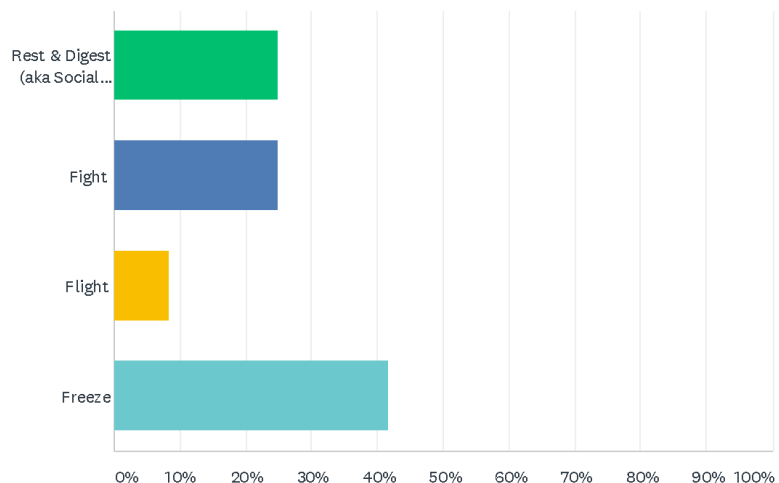
- [Facial Massages for Relaxation](#) (the sinus and ear massages are especially relaxing)
- [Vagus Nerve: Tapping to Mobilize](#) (an energizing technique)
- [Vagus Nerve: Breathing for Relaxation](#) (incorporates some intriguing science)

November *Lead-O-Meter* Results

When looking at the responses, it is interesting to see that most people found themselves in the 'freeze' stage most of the time. When faced with a stressor – such as this prolonged pandemic – our body doesn't know how to

continuously deal with this threat; hence, the feeling of freezing. Oftentimes, being overwhelmed accompanies the 'freeze' state as we do not know what we can do to 'escape' the danger.

Q1: Reflect on the last two weeks at work. Which of these stages do you find yourself in most of the time?



Q2: List 1-3 emotions you have been feeling at work lately.

Q3: Where do you feel these emotions in your body?

worried numb
energized behind
stressed grateful
unhappy hopeful
tired stuck frustrated dissociated
happy overwhelmed
bored anxious
lost excited

chest jaw
gut forehead
heart upper
stomach
back head

*Thank you for participating in this month's lead-o-meter!
Stay tuned for our next issue on December 4th.*

Sources

^{1,2} Krowiak, Suzanne (2020). "The Vagus Nerve: Your Superhighway to Physical, Mental and Emotional Health", [Tune Up Fitness Blog](#)

Nagi Szabi - unsplash.com

Next month: What are your glimmers?



How did you like this issue of ReCharge?

We welcome and appreciate your feedback and suggestions! [Fill out our feedback form](#) or contact Rochelle Morandini.



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