

## Body: Be Active

*Your body is the engine that powers your well-being. It's designed to move. Physical activities like walking, waltzing or wii-ing can positively influence the way you think, feel and function. Practicing an activity you enjoy for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, is a necessary ingredient for a long and happy life.*

[www.wheelofwellbeing.org](http://www.wheelofwellbeing.org)



### Heard of the Blue Zones?

The Blue Zones are pockets of people around the world with the highest life expectancy, or with the highest proportions of people who reach age 100. <https://www.bluezones.com/>



Research has found that people living in Blue Zones had nine commonalities that lead to healthier, happier lives – referred to as Power 9.



See more about Power 9 at:

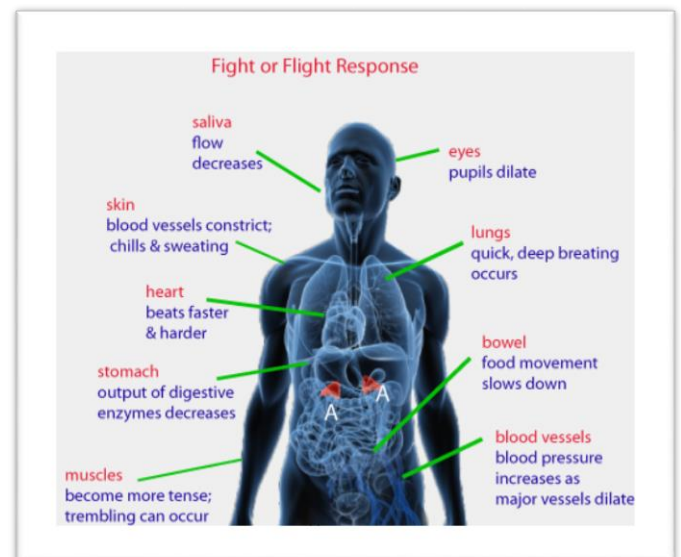
<https://www.bluezones.com/2016/11/power-9/#sthash.M7TM6OC1.dpuf>

One of the biggest impacts we experience in our modern day lives, is stress, with manifestations including a lower threshold for pain, increased blood pressure and risk of heart disease, disruptions to sleep patterns and digestive systems, and decreased ability to focus attention and concentrate.

The human body is biologically and historically programmed to respond to threats, which has supported our survival in sometimes hostile environments, but has created an unequal balance between the two parts of our central nervous system (CNS).

Activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) happens a lot in response to just living in the modern world. And because of this, it is important to learn how to switch off this over active SNS response, and take control over our biology with practiced effort.

The purpose of this part of the nervous system is all about survival, and when we are in this state, we experience some or all of these temporary changes to our body. This is fine for a short period of time.



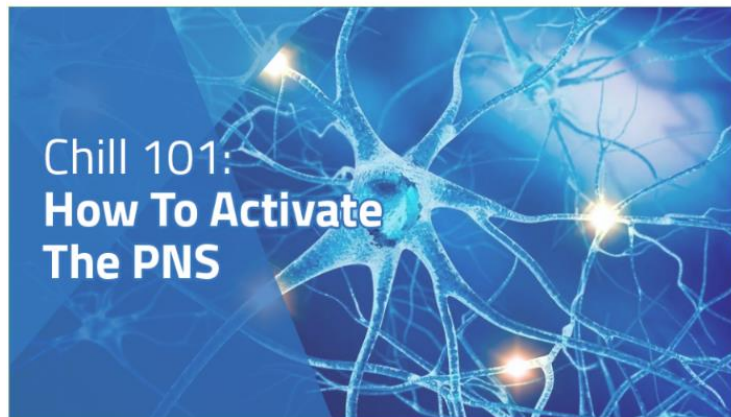
However the problem with our modern lifestyle is that the SNS wing of the nervous system, is chronically activated due to many psychological stressors that we have to deal with on a regular basis e.g. mortgage payments, high stress job, long working hours, negative world news

Some health risks associated with chronic activation of the SNS:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Gastrointestinal issues – IBS, chronic diarrhoea, constipation
- Immune system weakening
- Endocrine system issues – type 2 diabetes, decreased longevity

To ensure optimal functioning and overall wellbeing the sympathetic nervous system, which is hardwired to recognise and respond to threatening situations with fight, flight or freeze behaviours, needs to be in balance with the parasympathetic nervous system, which is

focussed on relaxation, rest and repair. An imbalance between the two systems over a length of time has adverse effects on our physical and mental wellbeing.



The Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) main purpose, is to control homeostasis and manage the “rest and digest” response? The PNS is our body’s naturally evolved system for switching off the threat response that is related to the SNS and its activation. We might move in and out of PNS naturally many times during the day.

How can we consciously induce PNS activation, which is the part of the nervous system that is responsible for slowing down, relaxing and recuperating, and therefore responsible for reducing the stress response and increasing positive emotional feelings?

Simple stress busters:

- Mindfulness – bring your attention to physical sensations
- Deep breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Positive emotions
- Meditation
- Positive mental focus, optimistic attitude
- Even fake laughter - Watch this video to see why <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eB3ISAYE-I>

Watch this video by Dr Mike Evans - *23 and 1/2 hours: What is the single best thing we can do for our health?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUalnS6HIGo>

Please feel free to distribute through your networks.

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## BODY: BE ACTIVE

Lunch time board games  
Head and neck massages  
Yoga  
Lunch time or after school walks  
Water challenge – 8 glasses a day  
30 minutes of exercise / day  
Practice self-care  
Song & dance  
Take the stairs instead of the lift  
Go for a bike ride  
Encourage students to ride their bikes to school  
Play a game  
Tai chi  
Yoga  
Slow swimming  
Being in nature