

clubjoy.

1(2) . DEC 2023

Y I N D E P E N D E N C E

Understanding Calm & Self./

DISCOVER
Breath,
Balance &
the Body.

About.

Welcome to clubjoy, a wellness zine by healthyhumansclub.

It is a way to process, reimagine and present boring topics about wellness in a more colorful and fun fashion.

We hope you will enjoy the present!

EVERY ONE CAN ANJOY.



We may not be professional writers nor artists, but clubjoy is the freedom to explore creatively, to present logic in illogical ways, to make sense with one's own senses.

It is meant to be free enjoyment, and we hope it does similar things for the reader.

vibe with us?

We are happy to support and feature aspiring artists. Please contact us.

loka@healthyhumansclub.org

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Understanding Calm & Self.

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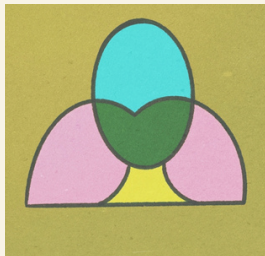
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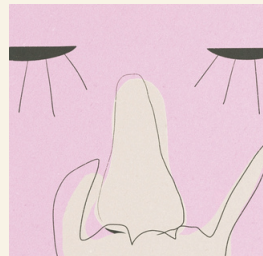
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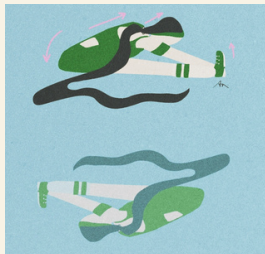
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CALM & INDEPENDENCE

Is knowing to stay internally calm - our way out of stress and surroundings?

I'm not sure every one has a noisy mind - but I'm sure every one has had one for at least a day.

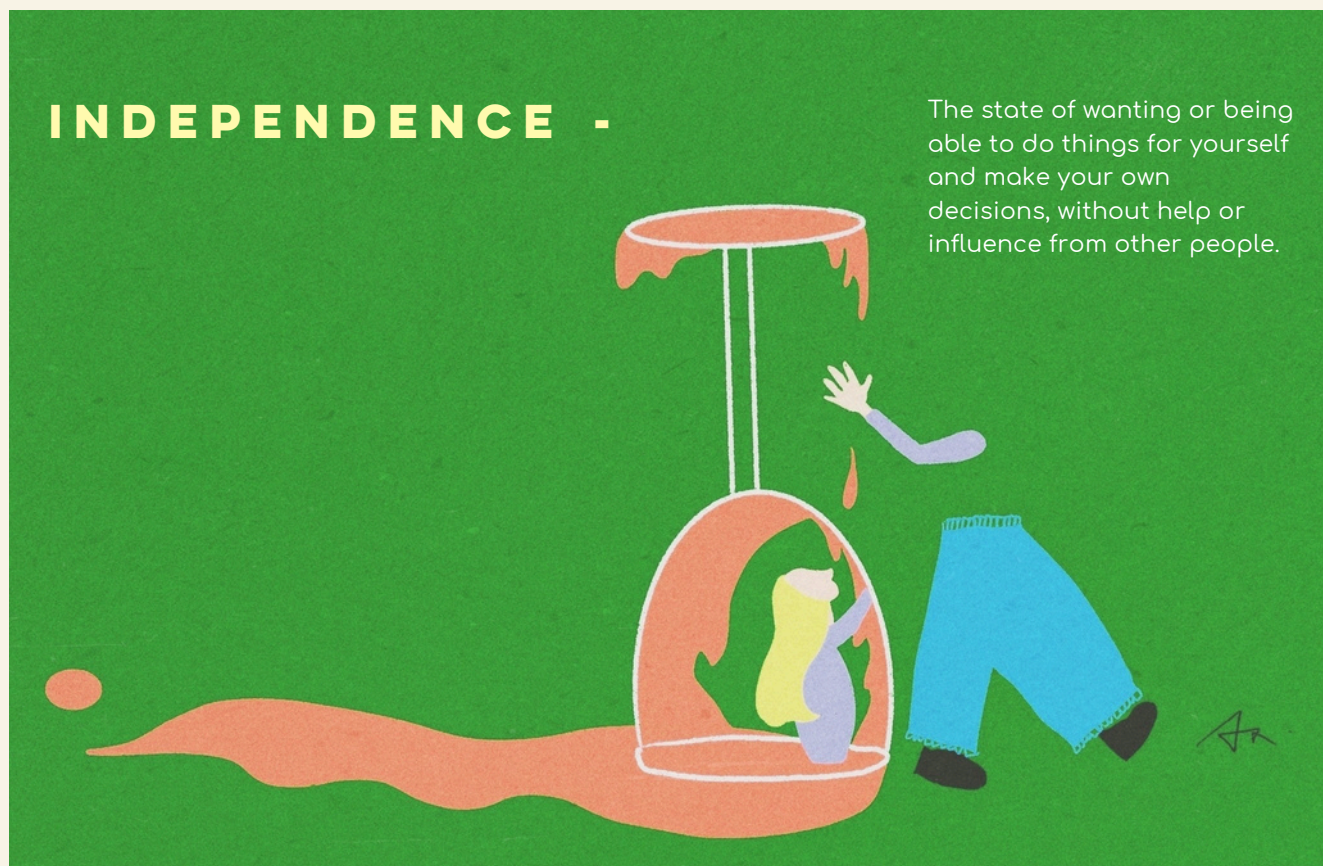
Some people never feel internally sound at all.

While we may call these "feelings", think them to be internal - much of them are actually built from our external conditions. One common, and arguably even normalized, feeling is stress.

Stress can arise not just from inadequate careers but also general confusion in life, ageing, or forgetting to close your windows.

So many sources, so little solutions. And while our bosses would argue stress is essential to "strive" - it is of our upmost responsibility to remind them of the links between stress and cardiovascular problems.

How then can we break out of being mere reactive products of our environments? Can we be considered truly independent if eternally subject to our surroundings?



Redfield Jamison, "An Unquiet Mind".



Sky Blues, 2023

CALM, COPE, CHANGE.

Change exists in all forms of shapes and sizes - big, small, extra big, extra loose. Most of the times, they're uncomfortable.

Perhaps from the idea that change challenges stability - especially when they show up unexpected - expecting to be hosted. The sheer entitlement!

Despite that, we need to know how to manage change. When deep in the stress trap — What do we do in the moment?

Our responses and reactions are part of our whole life experience. One way another, the current informs and inspires our future actions.



When confronted with change and stress, much goes on within our bodies as the brain processes the event and attempts survival.

Chronic exposure to such situations, along with poor coping strategies, can produce diseases or damage to the body - especially within cardiovascular health.

Deep breathing to calm down is a common and perennial practice to quickly get people back into their heads. We have come to believe a strong association between calm and freedom. It seems like when we can keep our minds calm, it is independent of what it receives.

In this issue, we focus on understanding the self's nervous system, and how to deliver messages of calm via breath and exercises.

ZEN IN OTHER FORMS

NO THINK



OVER THINK



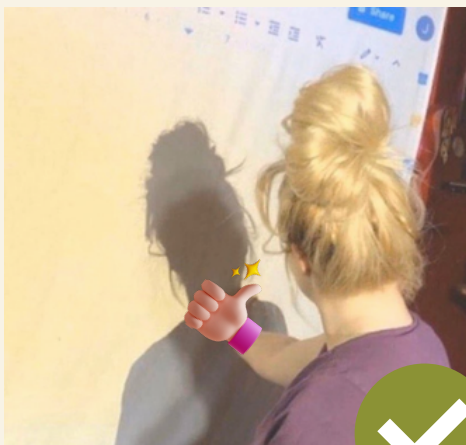
PRESENT



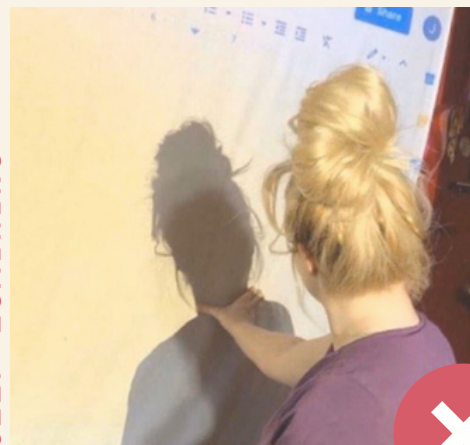
ABSENT

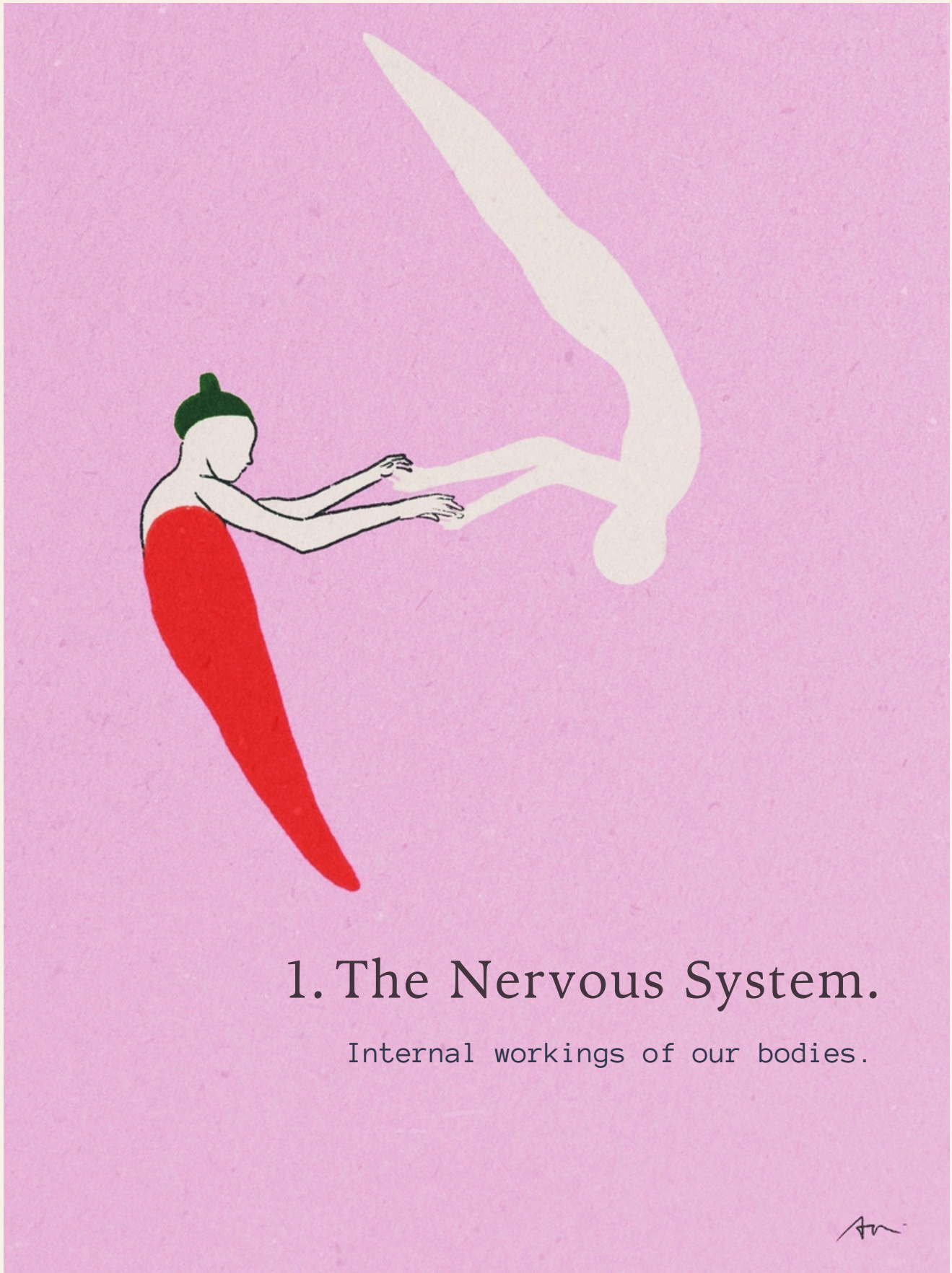


SELF-AFFIRMATIONS



SELF-LOATHING





1. The Nervous System.

Internal workings of our bodies.

Am

N E R V O U S S Y S T E M S



Our brains “listen” to what is sent through our nervous systems.

We have two nervous systems (NS) - the Central and the Peripheral.

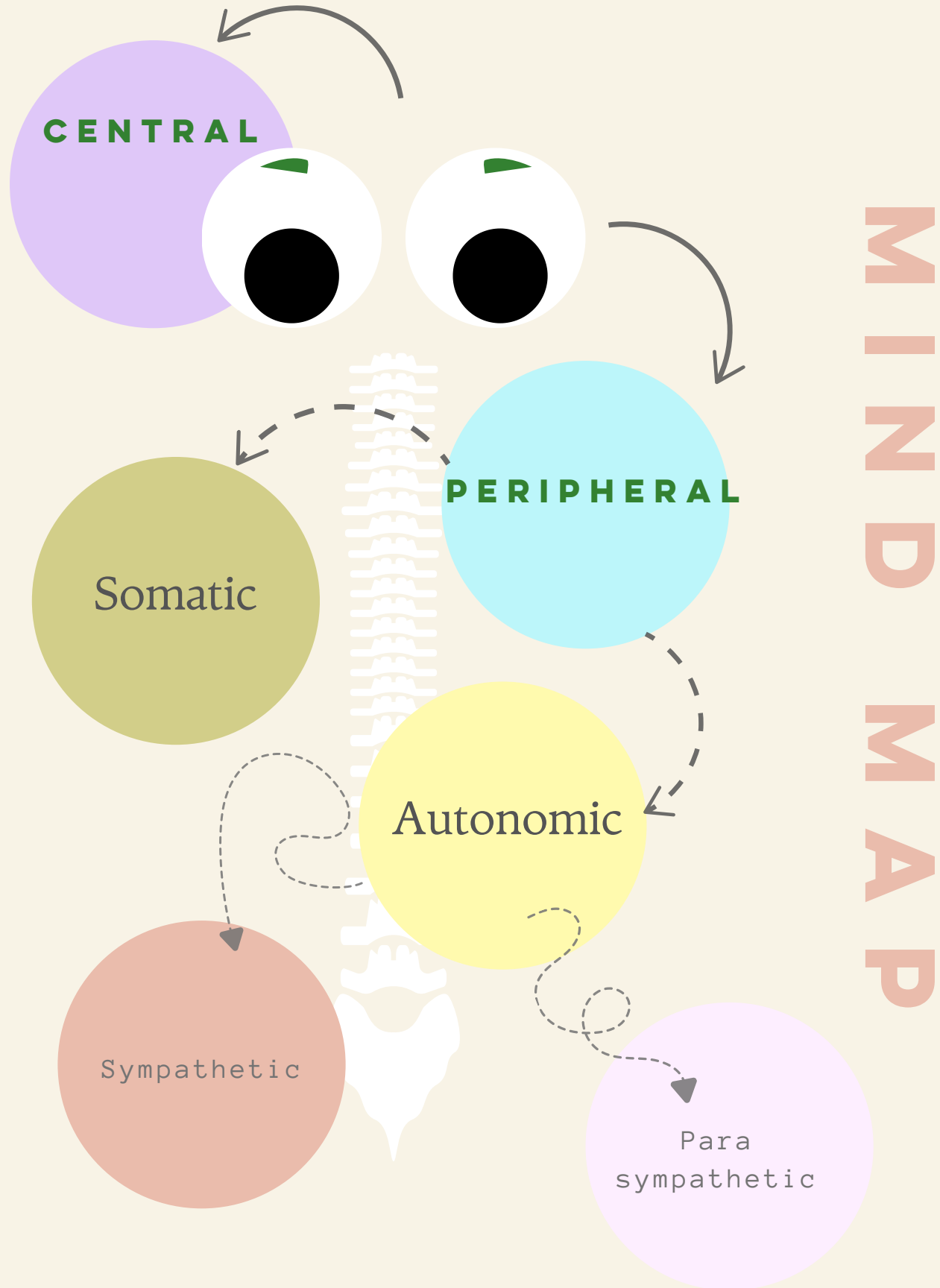
Central

Our central NS is prized like an apple to our eye. Essential as seed and core are to a fruit, it involves our brain and spine.

Peripheral

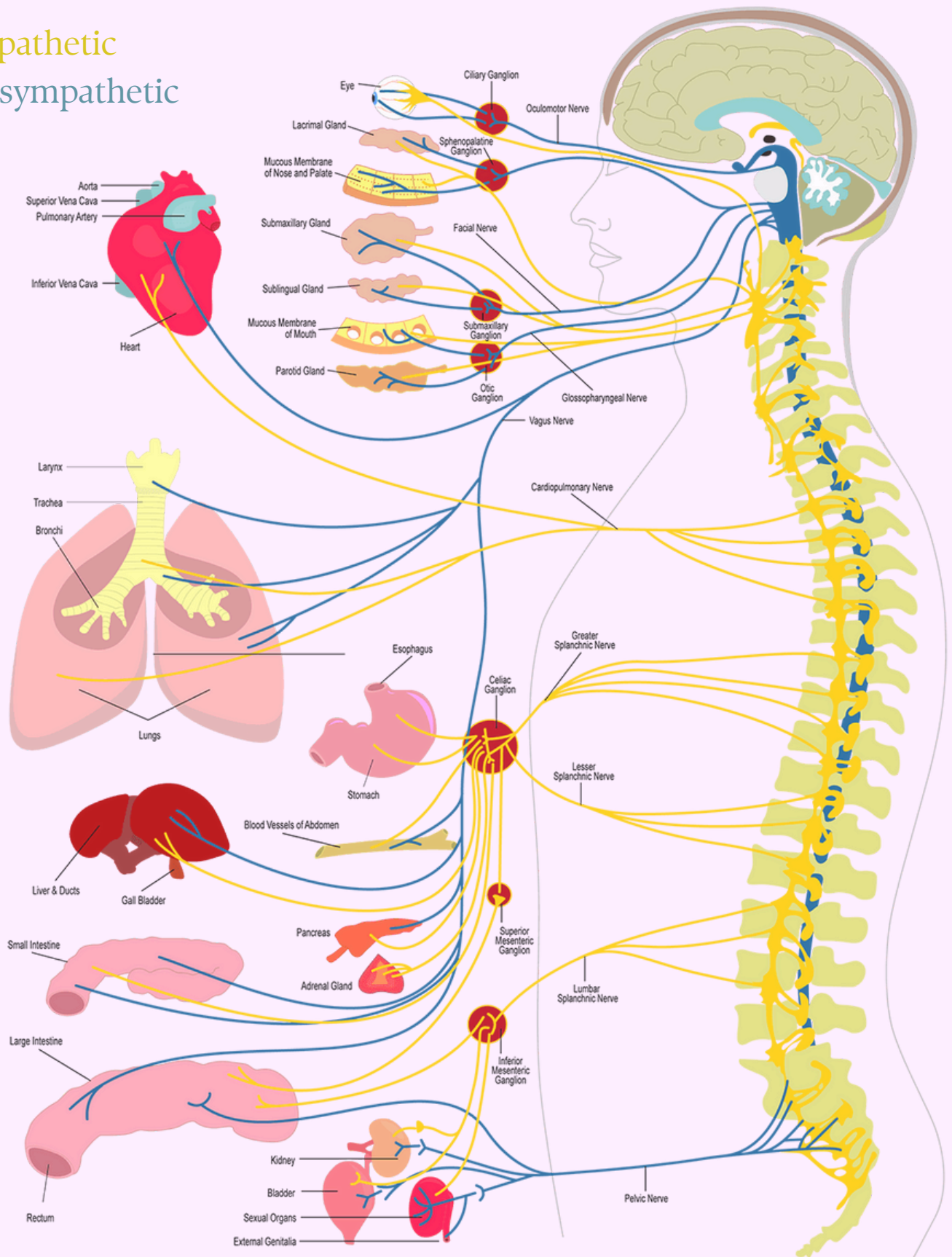
The peripheral NS, on the other hand, involves all other nerves branching out.

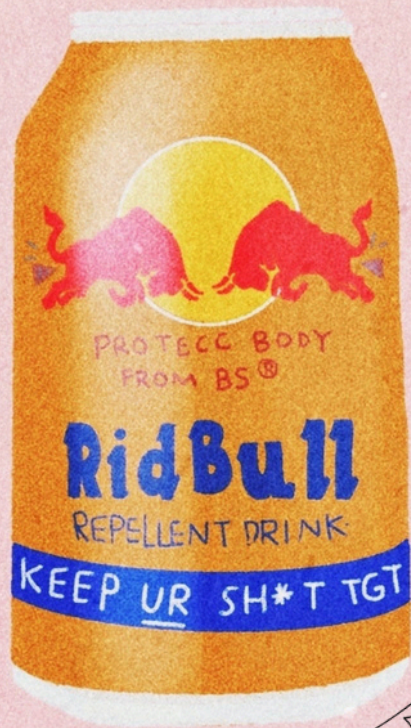
They are responsible for communicating messages between our brain and body, and can be categorised as “Somatic” and “Autonomic”¹.



AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM ²

- Sympathetic
- Parasympathetic





SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Our Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) forms part of our greater Autonomic system, and is responsible for our stress responses.

NO HEART FOR STRESS

We think stress looks like bills, deadlines and fights.

When we've seen enough of those, stress starts looking like vascular damage too.

Chronic increases in blood pressure, both by habitual stress responses of our natural and conditioned selves, form a vulnerability to cardiovascular diseases ³.

ATHEROSCLEROSIS

The formation and accumulation of plaques within arteries eventually restrict blood flow to the heart ⁴.

Our physiological response to chronic stress exposure greatly influence its occurrence ⁵.

ETERNAL TREADMILL

As arteries constrict, our hearts receive less oxygen and can eventually manifest in cardiovascular diseases and chest pains ⁶.

Constant activation of the SNS can also shake our sympathetic and parasympathetic tones out of balance ⁷. With more variability between our body's heart interbeat intervals, we will feel it - for it seems like the floor is always catching at our feet, and the sky always out for our patience.

PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Our Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) forms part of our greater Autonomic system, and is responsible for rest and counterbalancing of the sympathetic.

VAGUS NERVE

The vagus nerve is the main nerve of our PNS. The nerve regulates important bodily functions such as digestion, heart rate, skin sensations and even our physical reflexes such as coughing_{8,9}.

It is also responsible for exiting us from our fight-or-flight situations.

Do you remember the utter panic when it is about to be your turn in the longest queue, and your Mom is nowhere to be seen - the weight of her shopping basket start to bloom over your heart as you frantically scan your eyes in desperation - And suddenly - - amidst the sea of strangers, the familiar contours of her face surface. Your heart discovers its glow, your grip softens, and you calm down.

Every time we lose it, our Vagus Nerve, the longest one we have, brings us back.

Are our bodies' internal workings within our control at all?

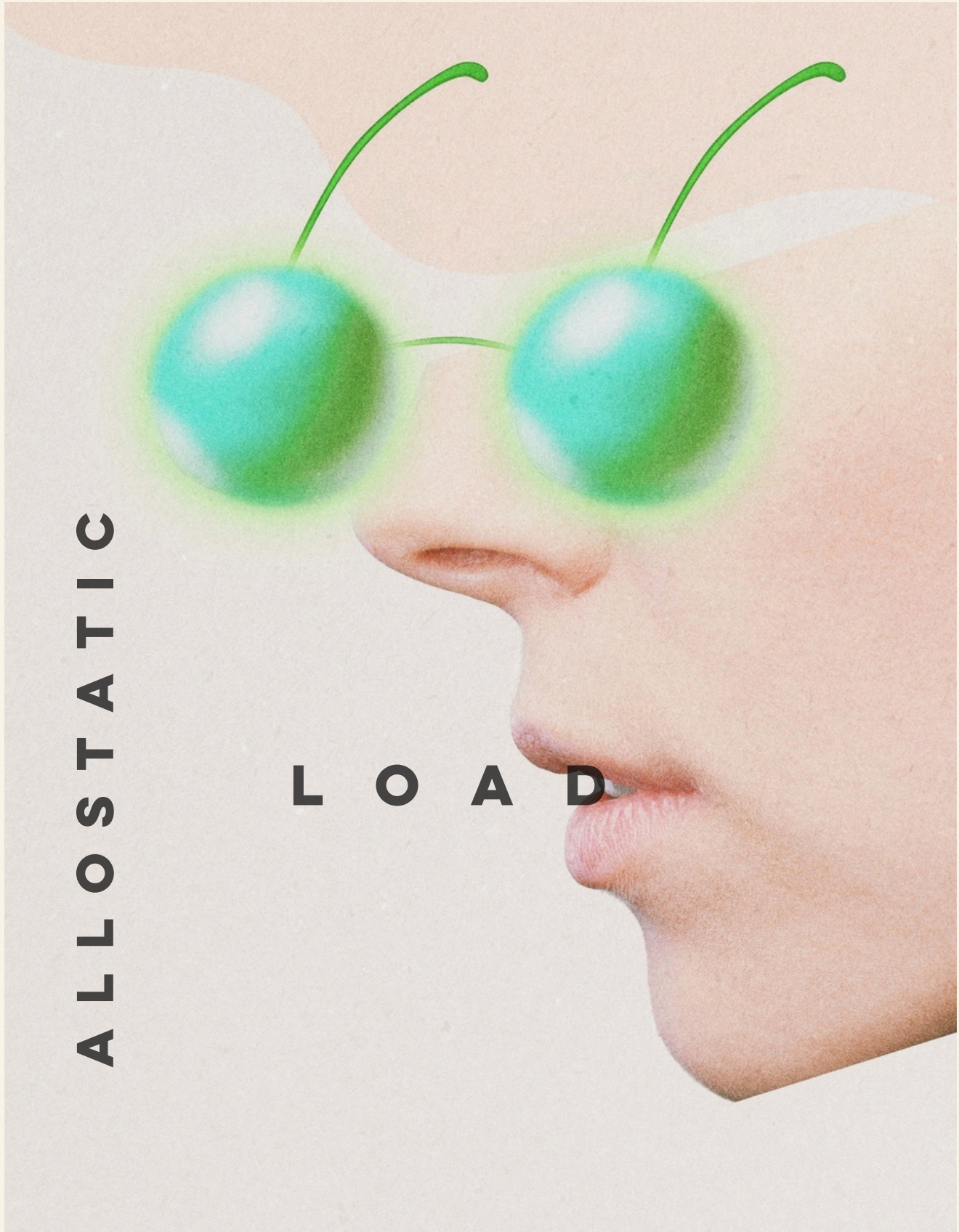
Turns out we can actually stimulate our VN sometimes to help us exit and manage stressful situations.

But first, one has to understand its workings.

HEART SLOW
CALM DOWN
DIGEST
IMMUNE

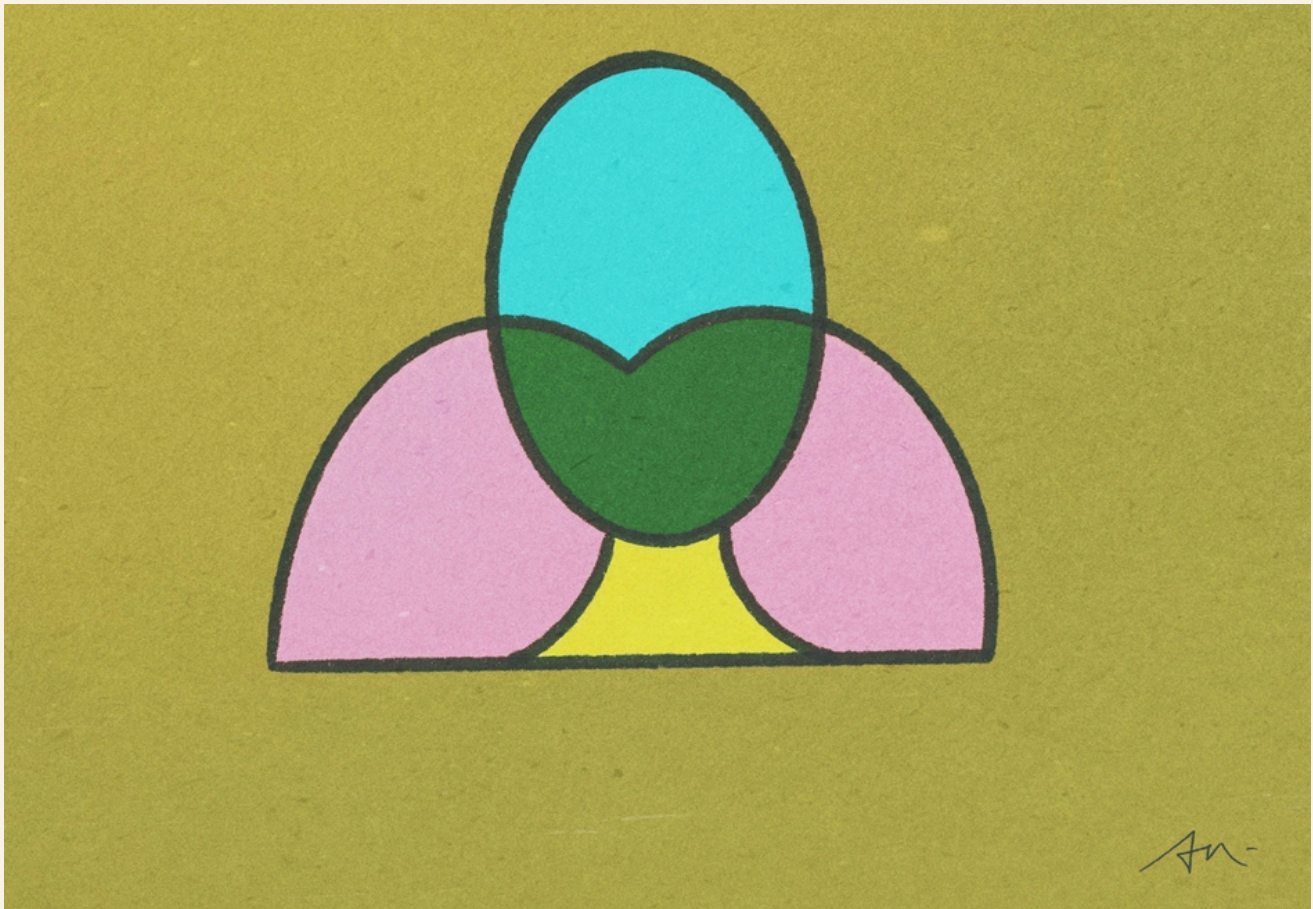


An-



IT'S NOT AGEING // IT'S LIVING

ALLOSTATIC LOAD:
HOW OUR LIVES SHAPE US
& VICE VERSA



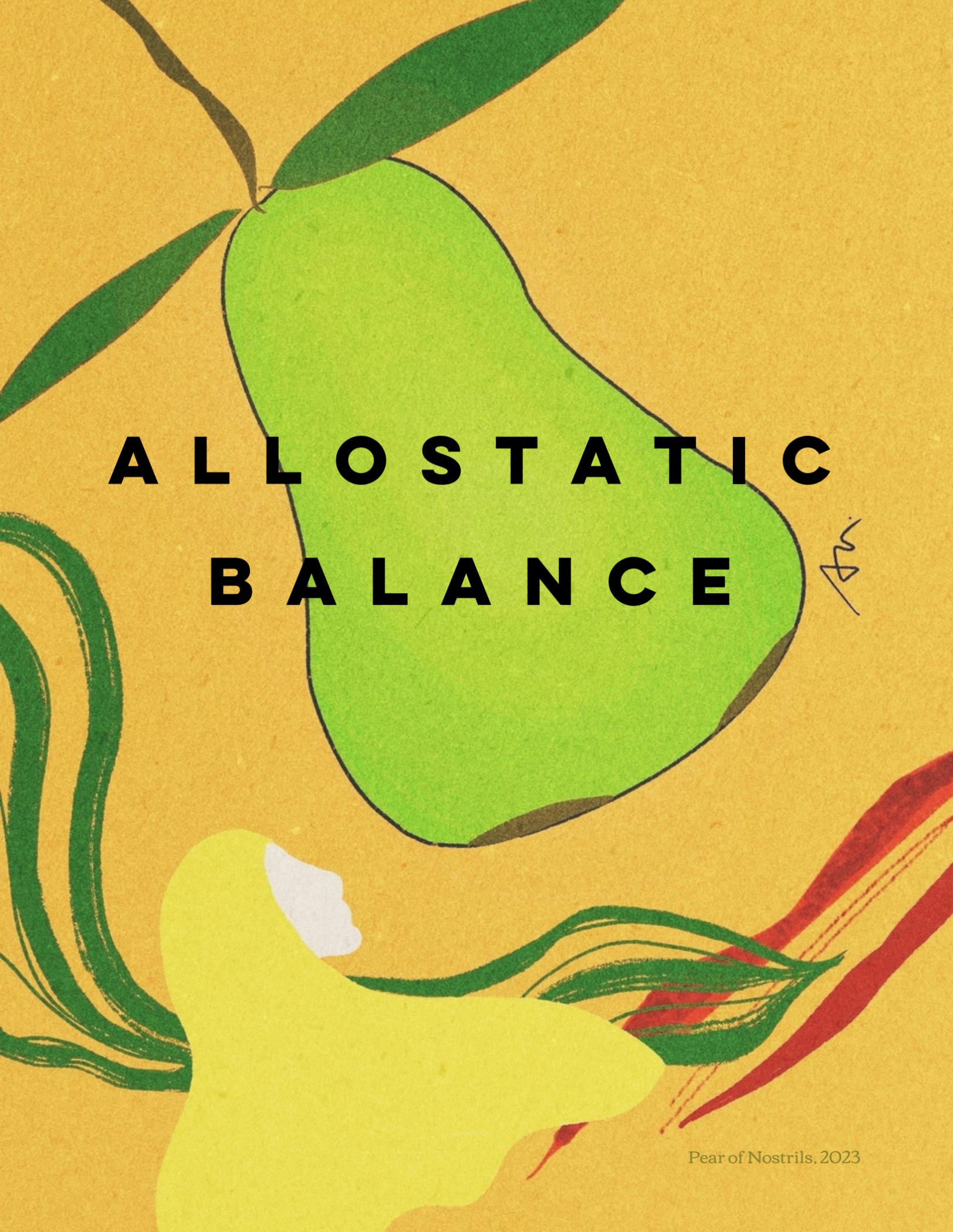
SHAPES & CYCLES

ALLOSTATIC LOAD sounds intimidating - possibly because it is. To put it simply, it is our lifetime baggage. Chronic exposure to trauma and stress in the experience we call "Life", that can be from grief, loss, or any other negative events ¹⁰.

Allostasis is to "achieve stability through change". It means to keep our head screwed on, even amidst our unendingly-changing, twisting and spiralling environments.

The dysregulation and overuse of our nervous system in communicating allostasis can change our brain and body over time ¹¹.

When the allostatic load gets too much - our brain, I suppose, finally understands our pain. Along with all the plaque within our arteries, the overload can greet us quite rudely and commonly in forms of cardiovascular problems.



**ALLOSTATIC
BALANCE**

Pear of Nostrils, 2023

Allostatic Balance

Allostatic balance is bringing both our sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems to function at even levels. There are certain practices we can adopt to achieve this. While lifestyle plays a huge role, we bring attention to breathing.

THE NERVE OF NOSE!

The Vagus nerve is long. Starting from the brain stem, it runs all the way through the face and thorax to the abdomen. By moving, singing, chanting and voluntarily controlling our breaths, we may stimulate the VN and learn a means to allostasis ¹² , ¹³ .

One can't help but wonder if the relationship between the Vagus Nerve, nose and throat influenced the world's old practices such as mantras, tribal songs, dances and the study of breath. Either way, we can find ways to integrate their benefits into our own current lives.

YOGA & MEDITATION

No other sciences of the breath and body have been studied and popularised like Yoga and Meditation.

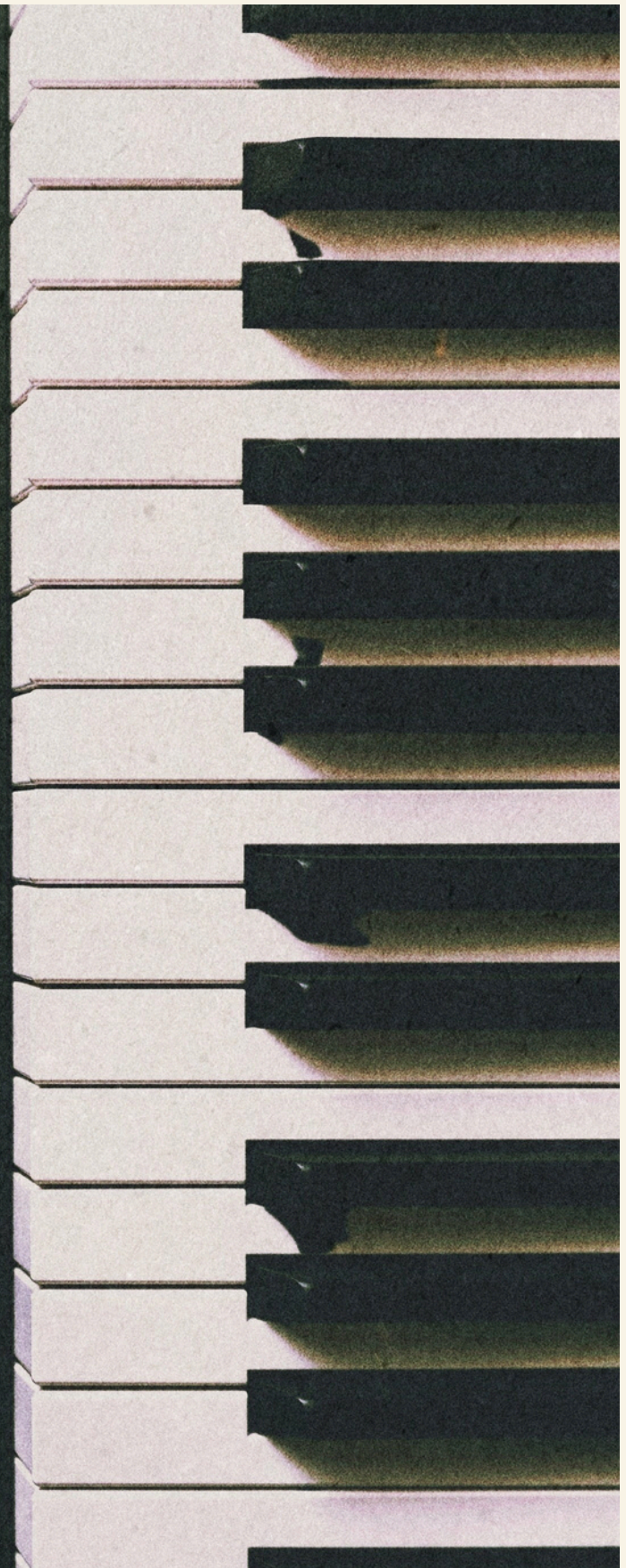
We have selected three different poses and two breathing techniques that promote an easy calming practice.

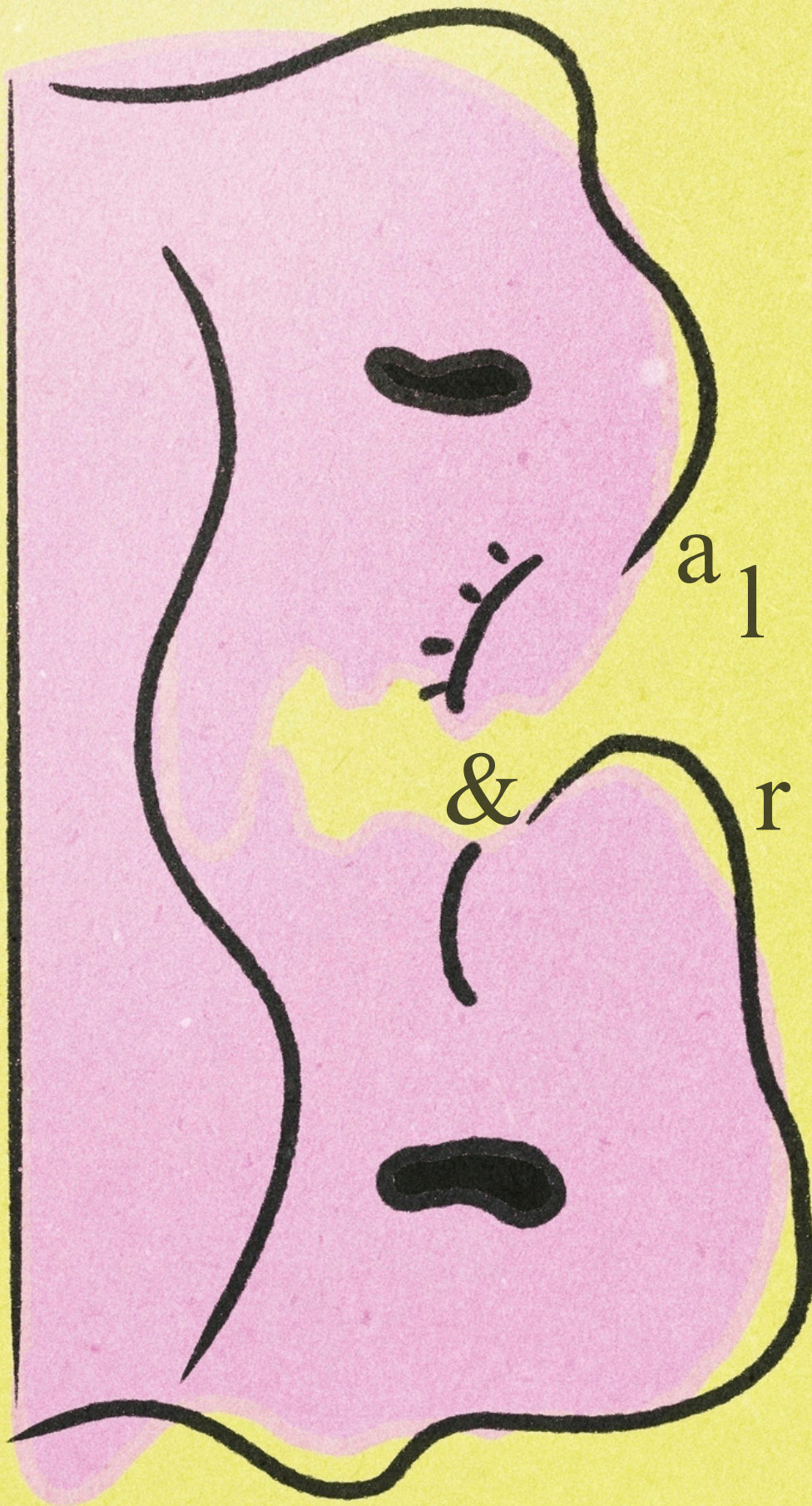
Do consult your healthcare provider if you have any preexisting conditions that may be contradictory.

To understand something, humans have always had to experience the opposite.

Balance is thought to be struck, when oppositional elements harmonise at equal levels.

And breathing can be quite instrumental to this process.





aⁿ l a c^e
& r e a^t h

An.

2B, 2023

Messages Within Air

Calming yogic practices that mediate safety to our brains.

To put Yoga in the simplest and least spiritual way - it is a method of subtle stimulations within specific nerves, in order to regulate the body and eventually clear the mind.

Traditional Yogic calming practices involve breathwork and certain postures to release bodily tensions.

Many people are overwhelmed by the thought of meditation and stillness, but here we break it down as simplest as possible.

POSTURE

Known as "Asana", these refer to poses that we consciously enter our bodies into. The "Yin" side of Yoga references the Yin/Yang duality, and is focused more on stillness, calm and gentleness.

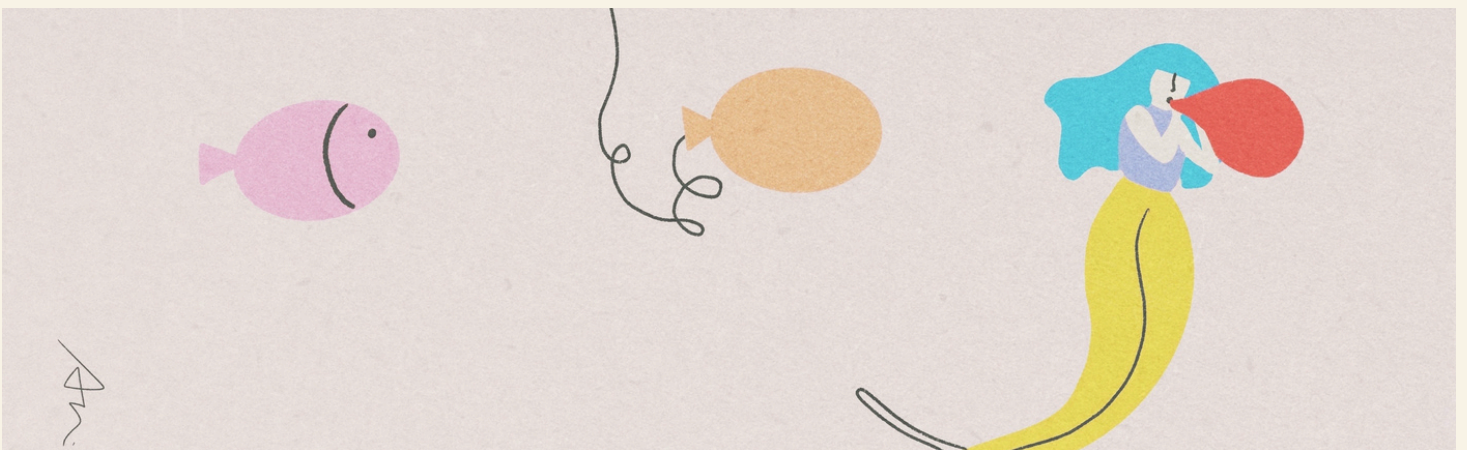
BREATHWORK

Breathwork is a lot about training the lungs. To expand its capacity, and to strengthen all the muscles surrounding our diaphragm, allowing it to facilitate deeper breathing.

It is through these conscious efforts that we learn to understand our own bodies, and how to control it.

"When the mind's activity is stilled,
we see life as it is..."

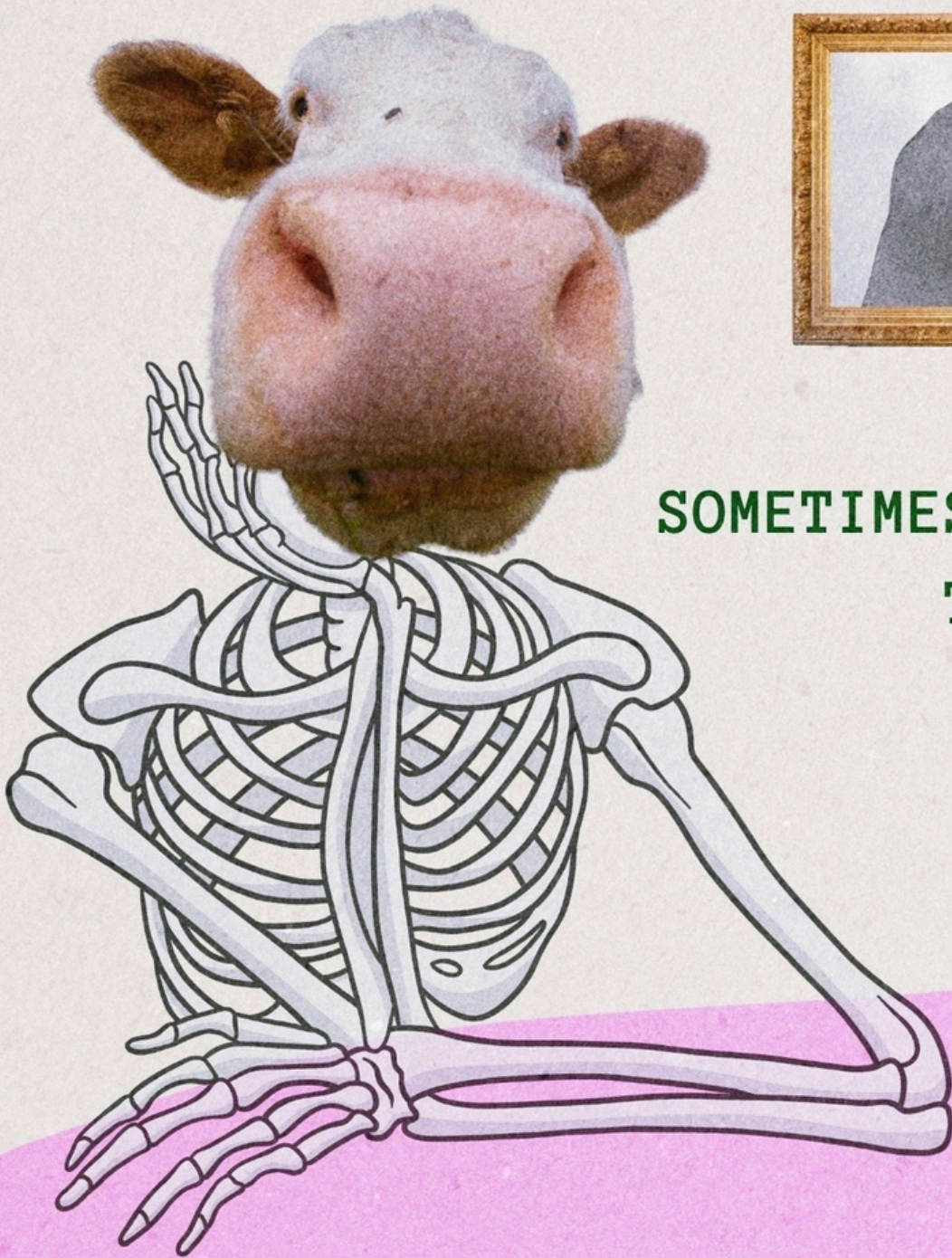
Ekhnath Easwaran, "Bhagavad Gita".



Underwater, Wondering, 2023



SOMETIMES YOU HAVE
TO BE NOSY.



How breathing
regulates our minds

Small Act, Big Effect.

HOW TO BREATHE MORE

BREATHWORK –

Inhalations activate our Sympathetic nervous system, while exhalations activate the Parasympathetic. More than equalising them, we can also use specific ratios to regulate our selves ¹⁴.

BREATH RETENTION

One of the easiest ways to train our breath and lungs is through the pacing and retaining of our breath. By simply effecting voluntary pauses in our respiratory patterns, we can influence our heart rates, moods and practise mindfulness towards our bodily workings.

BASIC PRACTICE:

- 1.Exhale fully by pushing all the air out of your lungs and stomach. Hold this for two counts.
- 2.Inhale slowly and steadily to a count of four. Hold this inhalation for two counts.
- 3.Exhale fully to a count of four, holding it for another two counts.
- 4.Repeat.

WHAT'S NEXT?

2:1 ratio of breathing is a common and general practice, meaning either the duration of our inhalations double the exhalations, or vice versa.

We inhale and hold the inhalation for a longer period to activate our SNS. Conversely, we exhale and hold that exhalation for a longer period to activate our PNS.



ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

As the name suggests, this is quite a straightforward practice. Our only challenge is pacing the breath - which we still rate easier than being merciful to our alarms' snooze buttons.

STEPS:

1. Bring your dominant hand to close, with only the thumb and pinky finger extended.
2. Bring your thumb to close your right nostril completely, as you exhale fully through the left.
3. Inhale through the left nostril
4. Use your pinky finger to now close your left nostril, as you exhale fully through the right.
5. Inhale fully (R)
6. Exhale fully (L)
7. Inhale fully (L)
8. Exhale fully (R)
9. Inhale fully (R)
10. Repeat steps 6 to 10.

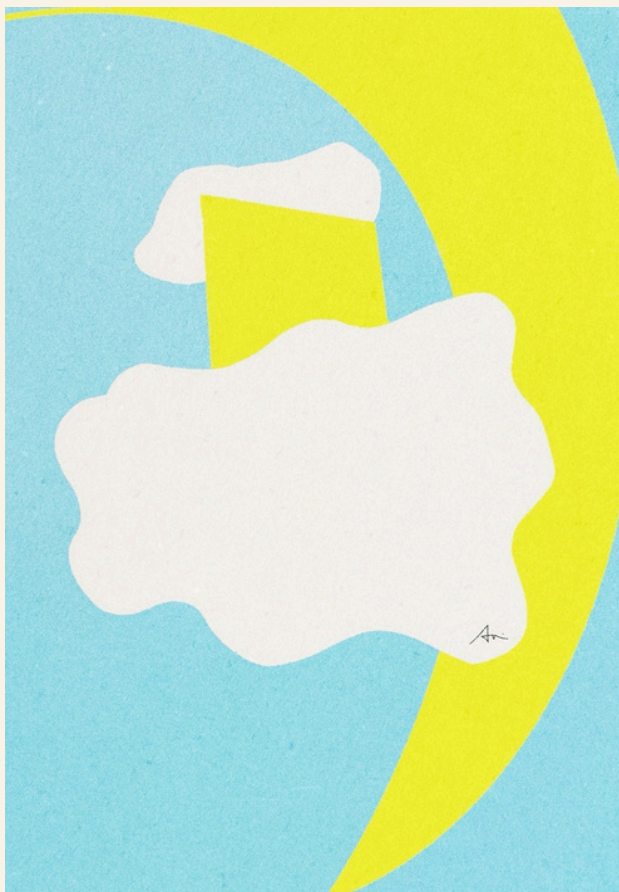
TIPS

- Relax your jaw, shoulders and rest your hands after you are done. Take a few moments to breathe normally - and observe it.
- You may try counting your breath for pacing. Start by breathing to counts of four, eventually increasing when you feel ready.



Multi-Purpose Breathing

How do we apply breathwork
in other areas of our life?



SLEEP

Breathing is not always for managing our daily lives. Given the role of exhalation in our activating our PNS, it can be quite an answer for putting the owls and insomniacs to rest.

To relax your mind and enter your body into relaxation mode, start observing your breath before you turn in. Get yourself comfortable in an undisturbed environment - adopt any position that is the most relaxing. Close your eyes and bring your attention towards your philtrum - the area just underneath our noses.

For rest, bring your attention to exhaling. Start first with even and full breathing (the lungs and tummy should fully expand at inhalation and fully contract at exhalation). If you notice your thoughts drifting, as they normally would - simply bring your attention back.

While keeping your inhalations constant, start to work on extending the pace and retention of your exhalation. Visualisation may help in "feeling" more:

Try imagining the breath either as a constantly expanding/contracting balloon, or as the rhythmic waves that flirt endlessly between the ocean and shore. As long as you can commit your focus to the breath and nothing else - it doesn't matter how long they're performed or held for. Now is a time to relax - both the body and brain.

MUSCLE CONDITIONING

Any athlete or active person understands the importance of breath and our respiratory patterns in keeping our bodies performing.

Every time we fully inhale, our rib muscles contract as the chest cavity expands. As we exhale, we use predominantly our stomach muscles to push the air out.

Perhaps most pronounced in Pilates - a controlled exhalation through our mouth with our lips pursed into an "O" shape can assist in activation of our Transverse Abdominis (deepest abdominal muscle).

Women are also commonly taught to practise "belly breathing" through and after pregnancy to condition the muscles and form healthy muscle memory.

While it will not instantly transform us into sculpted and toned hot stuffs - constant practice can improve muscle awareness and condition.



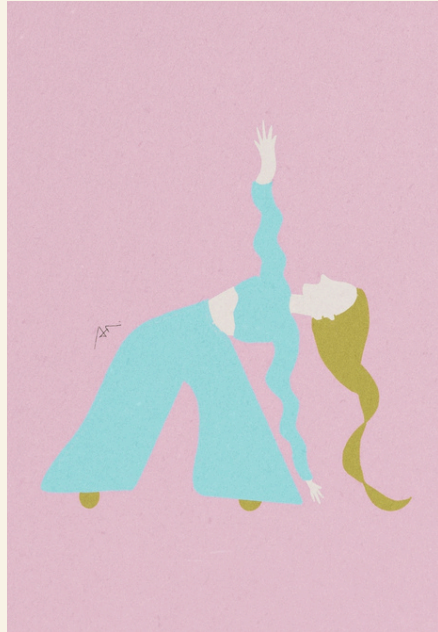
DID YOU KNOW?

Breathwork is complementary with most exercises to regulate heart rate and produce a deeper contraction of muscles.

To familiarise yourself with the latter, lay out a mat and lie on your back with your knees bent and pointing up. Ground your feet firmly into the mat. As you exhale fully, visualise closing in on that small gap that is occurring between your lower spine and the surface.

Think about pulling your navel in towards the spine. To intensify, raise your feet and bend your legs at a right angle from the knees. Drop the heels to tap the mat as you exhale fully, contracting your abdomen. Inhale to raise the legs back up.

Posing for Wellness.



How simple Yoga poses regulate our bodies and nervous systems.

• Twisting

FOR: Stimulation of the nerves along our spine, digestion and mild lower back pain.

Twisting is cherished for its role in blood circulation and nourishment to our spinal disks. Introducing opposing forces at the spine also tones the nerves and massages our internal organs, inspiring improved digestion processes.

• Hip Opening

FOR: Releasing tension within the hip flexors, improving motion range and circulation.

Tightness within the hip flexors is increasing common with prolonged sitting, and often develop into back and neck pain. Hip flexibility and stability is extremely important in keeping us balanced and protected from injuries.

• Forward Folding

FOR: Improving blood flow to the head, and the lengthening of our leg muscles.

Forward folds allow for PNS activation through the lengthening of our necks and backs. The gentle inversion also allows improved circulation of blood to the head.



1. Hip Opening

Take a stance wider than hip-width, and turn your front foot to point forward and your back foot to the side.

Facing the side of the room, bring your arms up to a T-shape with the hands pointing forward and back.

Begin to reach forward, then down for the front shin, ankle or toe.

Lightly turn your chest and hips open towards the side.



2. Twisting

In a cross legged seat, inhale as you reach your crown and spine tall. Place your left hand on your right knee and your right hand just behind your seat. As you exhale, gently turn your torso to the right, while you bring your chin over your right shoulder and gaze over it.

15 - 20s

Try to hold your pose for this duration before repeating on the other side.



3. Forward Folding

Sit in an “L” shape with your spine upright and your legs extended straight. Lengthen your spine as you inhale.

Upon exhalation, begin to gently reach your toes. As soon as your hamstrings threaten to snap, bend your knees.

Focus on getting your stomach and thighs to meet, while you reach your chin towards the chest to extend the back of the neck.

Hold the pose for fifteen to twenty seconds.

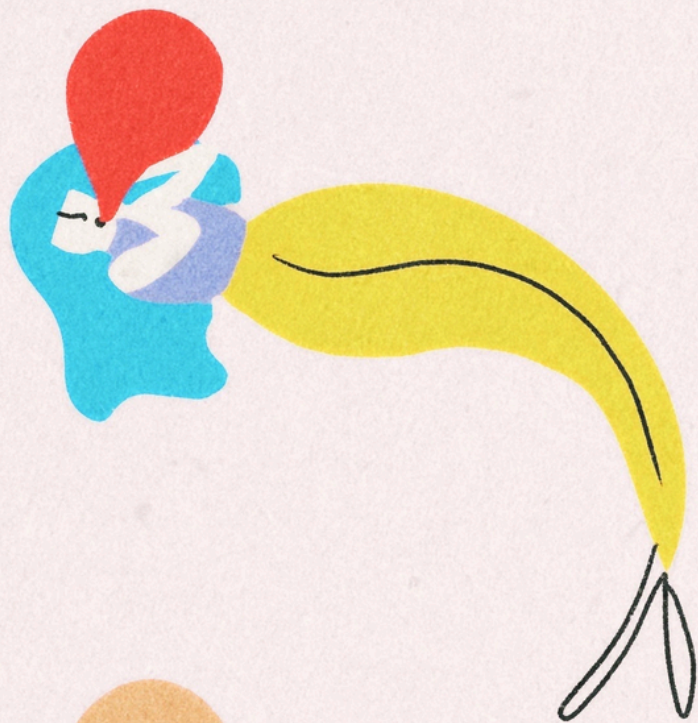


For something a little more passive, lie supine with your legs extended up a wall.

Allow your arms to relax by the sides, while you slowly straighten your legs. When you are comfortable, deepen your breaths and begin to gently flex at your feet, pulling the toes towards you.

You should feel a stretch all along the back of your legs, the arches of your feet, while blood flows to the head in this gentle inversion.

LUNGS



AIR.

An-till Then,

This has been clubjoy Issue 1(2) of Calm – knowing the physical Self and actualising our internal wisdom for mental independence.

The content provided is intended solely for educational and informational purposes only and does not constitute professional medical advice or services. The information provided should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease, and those seeking personal medical advice should consult with a licensed physician. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health provider regarding a medical condition.

There is much more to our bodies, and many more means to experience Wellness outside of our breath. We acknowledge the limitations in what we can present here, and thus suggest readers to always read and explore further on their topics of interest.



Cover Info



Yindependence (2023)

Everyone has their own history of depending on external sources for safety and stability.

Sometimes, we form habits or relationships to dodge fear, uncertainty and stress.

Breathing to balance our minds is a slow but steady step to improving our states of mindfulness and self-awareness.

The more our nerves stay unbothered, the more we trust our selves, the easier it eventually becomes to leave our invisible rooms.

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EnJoyed.