

Stimulating a Vagal Nerve Response:

In a study, participants were instructed to sit and think compassionately about others by silently repeating phrases like **“May you feel safe, may you feel happy, may you feel healthy, may you live with ease,” and keep returning to these thoughts when their minds wandered (R)**. Compared to the controls, the meditators showed an overall increase in positive emotions, like joy, interest, amusement, serenity, and hope after completing the class. And these emotional and psychological changes were correlated with a greater sense of connectedness to others — as well as to an improvement in vagal function as seen in heart-rate variability (R).

Simply meditating, however, didn't always result in a more toned vagus nerve. The change only occurred in meditators who became happier and felt more socially connected; for those who meditated just as much but didn't report feeling any closer to others, there was no change in the tone of the vagal nerve (R).

Breathing Exercises

Breathing in and out with resistance will likely stimulate your vagus nerve better – kind of like jogging with a backpack. A breathing exercise is to breathe out as hard as you can until it's really uncomfortable and until you notice how awake you are. I haven't seen studies on this, but I suspect it will help with your vagus nerve.

1. Cold Showers and cold water
2. Gargaling
3. Yoga
4. Singing and Chanting - OM for example
5. Positive Social Relationships
6. Deep slow breathing - belly breathing
7. Laughter
8. Prayer - saying the Rosary (if you are Catholic)
9. Breathing Exercises
10. Probiotics
11. Exercise
12. Massage - Foot Massage and Caratoid Neck Massage
13. Sleep on your right side
14. QiGong or Tai Chi
15. Gargling
16. EPA/DHA
17. Oxytocin
18. Zinc
19. Tongue Depressors
20. Acupuncture
21. 5HTP
22. chew gum
23. eat fiber
24. coffee enemas
25. tensing abdominal muscles - push down kegel