

Sunrise Physical Therapy

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What does the Autonomic Nervous System have to do with my symptoms?

Being comfortable in your own skin
Neurological and physiological balance
Feeling calm, peaceful, happy, and able to enjoy the moment
A balance between the Sympathetic and Parasympathetic states

This is what homeostasis is. This is the state the body is *designed* to be in at rest. Unfortunately, that is not the state many of us operate out of. We tend to live in a stressed out, sympathetic state.

The American Medical Association sites STRESS as a causative factor in over 90% of ALL medical diagnoses.

The Startle Reflex is a systemic, whole body reflex associated with the Autonomic Nervous System that prepares you to respond to a perceived threat. It is triggered when a Fight, Flight, or Freeze response is initiated within the body. Examples include if something makes a loud noise behind you, a dog runs out chasing you, a car swerves towards you, your boss yells at you, etc. The startle response involves multiple systems throughout the body including the Nervous, Cardiac, Circulatory, Respiratory, Digestive, Reproductive, Muscular, Immune, and Endocrine Systems.

This reflex is a primitive reflex that originates from the primitive part of the brain and is something that we have no control over. All mammals have this reflex, it is designed to protect the species, and all mammals are *designed* to discharge the energy that is created during the activation of this reflex. Unfortunately humans, with their large neo-cortex, don't do a very good job of discharging this energy. Holding this energy causes neurophysiological changes to the human organism, upsetting the normal sympathetic/parasympathetic balance causing the myriad of symptoms associated with stress and trauma.

The following ailments can often be attributed to the long-term affects of living with this internal imbalance:

- Sleep Disorders
- Eating Disorders
- Chronic Pain
- Headaches/Migraines
- Poor Digestion
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Crohn's Disease
- Bowel/Bladder Dysfunction
- Depression
- Long Term Reliance on Pain/Anti-inflammatory Medication
- Fibromyalgia
- Myofascial Pain Syndrome
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- High Blood Pressure
- Racing (elevated) Heart Rate
- Adrenal Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Suppressed Immune System Function

The following circumstances can trigger this overdrive:

- Trauma
- Chronic Pain/Illness
- Anxiety Related Disorders
- Depression
- Post Traumatic Stress
- Stress and Tension
- Real or Perceived Life Threat

Many people think of the Trauma category as major, life threatening trauma (war, rape, etc). For purposes of holding patterns, trauma is better defined as “*any negative life event occurring in a state of relative helplessness*“. This includes not only hard traumas, but the cumulative effect of soft traumas as well. Examples of trauma include:

- *Death of a loved one(s)*
- *Divorce*
- *Life threatening illness*
- *Physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse*
- *Assault or threat of assault*
- *Bullying*
- *Witnessing terror*
- *Experiencing a fire*
- *An embarrassing event*
- *Poor business decisions*
- *Being fired*
- *Being laid off*
- *Choking or being choked*
- *Coming out (sexual preference)*
- *Wartime experiences*
- *Sickness of a spouse/child/friend*
- *24/7 concern over a child's allergies and chronic illnesses (ie: peanuts) or sickness*
- *Foreclosure*
- *Bankruptcy*
- *Involvement in a flood, tornado, earthquake or hurricane (natural disaster)*
- *Child of an alcoholic*
- *Hit by a car*
- *Unresolved sports injuries*
- *Defamation of character*
- *Suicide of family member, friend*
- *Failed surgery*
- *Struck by lightning*
- *Holocaust survivor*
- *Child of holocaust survivor*
- *Betrayal*
- *Never being told you were loved*
- *Abandonment*
- *Alcoholism*
- *Miscarriage or long term failure to become pregnant*
- *Substance abuse*
- *Car jacking*
- *Empty nest syndrome*
- *Name calling*
- *Single parenthood*
- *Carbon monoxide poisoning*
- *Awareness during anesthesia*
- *Neglect*
- *Near drowning experience*
- *Adoption*
- *Motor vehicle accident*
- *Abortion*
- *Stressful home environment (ghosts!)*

If you have experienced some of these traumas or other causative factors and are experiencing symptoms from the symptom list, your Autonomic Nervous System is

probably out of balance and you are living in a dysregulated state. This state is driven by natural protective reflexes that are deep in your primitive brain and are very difficult for you to consciously change or for medication to change for you.

The good news is that these patterns can be changed. And they can be changed relatively easy, with no invasive procedures, and no medication. The body can be reprogrammed to respond appropriately to current and past stressors, and the physical and energetic blocks from past episodes can be released from the body.

I am working with several unique techniques that specifically address resetting the Autonomic Nervous System. One is Associative Awareness Technique, another is Tension/Trauma Releasing Exercises, and another is Primal Reflex Release Technique. See their respective pages on my website for more information on these amazing techniques. Another technique that is very helpful is Amygdala Retraining, created by Ashok Gupta out of England. You can also link to his work form my site, access his medical paper and watch some of his video explaining how a sensitized amygdala affects the nervous system. While his techniques are aimed at Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia I have found the principles apply to many other chronic conditions as well.

All of these techniques are aimed at rebooting and balancing your Autonomic Nervous System to eliminate the dysregulation and the imbalance it causes, restoring neurological and physiological balance within your body. Combining appropriate parts of these various techniques with structural work allows the body to function and operate like it was designed to. The results are truly amazing and can be life changing for many chronic conditions.

I am pleased to be able to offer these services in the Four Corners Region. While each technique has it's own merits, combining bits and pieces of each address all the major factors causing this dysregulation and the combined effects are dramatic. There are numerous steps to these programs, but many of them are self-applied by the client once you learn them.

To contact me regarding this process or to schedule an appointment, email me at rick@SunrisePhysicalTherapy.com or call me at (970) 749-5308.