

The Window of Tolerance

How stress pushes you out of your steady zone, the signs of each state, and simple ways back. A nervous-system map.

The window of tolerance is the zone where you can feel and think at the same time, stay present, and cope. Stress can push you above it or below it. The skill is noticing which zone you're in and gently coming back to the middle. Widen the window over time with sleep, routine, movement, and connection.

Hyperarousal (too much)	What it can feel like: anxious, panicky, racing thoughts, anger, on edge, can't settle, keyed up.	What can help: slow the exhale, box breathing, 5-4-3-2-1 grounding, orient to the room, a short walk.
Window of tolerance (the goal)	What it can feel like: calm and alert, present, able to think and feel at once, flexible, connected.	What can help: keep it steady with sleep, regular meals, movement, and time with people you trust.
Hypoarousal (too little)	What it can feel like: numb, shut down, foggy, disconnected, heavy, flat, far away.	What can help: gentle movement, orient to your surroundings, name what you notice, reach out to someone.

This is a calming and self-awareness tool, not a treatment. If you often live outside your window, a licensed clinician can help you widen it.

Learn more: [Window of Tolerance at shrinkdaily.com/concept/window-of-tolerance](https://shrinkdaily.com/concept/window-of-tolerance)