FREE RESOURCE · SELF-REGULATION

Tuning In: Interoception

How noticing your body's signals earlier helps you stay calm, steady, and in control.

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Interoception is your sense of what's happening *inside* your body — your heartbeat, breathing, hunger, thirst, tight muscles, or butterflies in your stomach. Feelings often start as body signals. When you notice them early, you can respond early. When they're missed, they can build into overwhelm. The good news: this sense gets stronger with practice.

1 **Check in 3 times a day**
Pause for 60 seconds at each meal. How do your head, hands, chest, and stomach feel? Just name it — "tight," "warm," "heavy." No fixing needed.

2 **Connect the signal to the need**
"Tight shoulders and short breaths → I'm stressed → 5 slow breaths and a stretch." "Empty stomach and grumpy → I'm hungry → eat."

3 **Practice through movement**
In yoga or a simple stretch, ask "Where do I feel this?" Notice warm water in the shower or your feet on the floor.

Tools to help you feel more settled

When you feel revved up
- Breathe in for 4, out for 6–8
- Cool water on your hands or face
- Push against a wall or squeeze and release your fists
- A slow walk or gentle rocking

When you feel low or foggy
- Step outside into fresh air and sunlight
- Name 5 things you see, 4 you hear, 3 you feel
- Hum, sing, or pray out loud
- Call or sit with someone you feel safe with

Go gently
If paying attention to your body feels uncomfortable — which is common after trauma or long illness — start small: short check-ins, eyes open, focusing on your hands or feet. A trauma-informed therapist can help.

LEARN MORE
- **Kelly Mahler, OT** — interoception resources: kelly-mahler.com
- **Mindful.org** — free guided body scans
- **Free videos:** "Whole Living with Nikki" on YouTube

KEY EVIDENCE

- Craig AD. Nat Rev Neurosci. 2002;3:655–666.
- Khalsa SS, et al. Biol Psychiatry CNNI. 2018;3:501–513.
- Price CJ, Hooven C. Front Psychol. 2018;9:798.
- Mahler K. Interoception: The Eighth Sensory System. 2017.

Make it personal: take the free 60-second quiz or book a **free consultation** at **wholelivingwithnikki.com** — services are pay what you can.

Educational wellness information, not medical advice or treatment. Check with your care team before starting new activity. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness, chest pressure, or shortness of breath.