



# Sensory Strategies for Regulation

## What's Regulation?

Regulation is the ability to move between nervous system states in order to adjust to what's happening inside and outside of us. This lets us adapt/ function without being overwhelmed.

## Why do people with ADHD need regulation strategies?

ADHD can be thought of as a regulatory disorder. Regulation of our energy levels, attention, alertness, emotions, and activity levels can all be impacted with ADHD.

## Why Sensory Strategies?

Sensory strategies are an excellent way to regulate your nervous system and they're accessible to everyone. They're free (or cheap) and available whether you're at home, school, work, or running errands. You're already using some of these strategies without realizing it.

When you do things like: pace because you're nervous, rock back in your chair when you're trying to stay awake, or grab a crunchy snack to calm after a stressful day, your body is seeking out sensory input to regulate your nervous system!

You can learn to leverage these sensory inputs to help you calm down, wake up, manage intense emotions, and change your attention/alertness level.

# Sensory Systems

These aren't the *only* sensory systems we can use, but the 3 systems below are what I think of as "heavy hitters". They make a big impact on our nervous system and that impact can last a long time. They're the perfect place to start when we're learning how to leverage sensory strategies to calm, energize and focus.

## Proprioceptive

Think heavy input to your joints and muscles



## Tactile

Think all things touch and temperature!



## Vestibular

Think movement and balance





# Proprioceptive

## ***-input to muscles and joints***

\*Use when running high OR low to change your nervous system level.

\*It's hard to mess this one up.

\*You can get benefits with 5 minutes.

\*This input can change your nervous system level for HOURS.

## Ideas for Input:

Eating chewy/crunchy

Chewing gum

Sucking through straw

Tap your foot

Bounce your leg

Doodle or color

Jump on a trampoline

Chair dips/ Wall sits

Dance or run

Go for a walk

Yoga/ Stretching

Tug of War

Massage

Weighted blanket/vest

Bear Hug

Pulling and Pushing

Tug of war

Carry heavy things

Plank, Squats

Pushup





# Vestibular

## **- balance, movement and spatial orientation**

\*Use this input when you are running high OR low

\*Very powerful/ long lasting input

\* Rhythmic and Steady = Calming

\*Fast and Irregular = Elevating



## Ideas for Input:

Rock in a chair

Jump on a trampoline

Bike

Skateboard

Slides

Swings

Somersaults

Riding in car

Dance or run

Walking

Wiggle cushion

Using yoga ball as seat





# Tactile Input

## ***-touch and temperature***

- \*Easy to use in class or work
- \*Writing/doodling helps learning
- \*Good for when moving isn't preferred
- \*Tactile defensiveness



## Ideas for Input:

- Stretch putty or dough
- Pop bubble wrap
- Warm bath or shower
- Lightly scratch scalp
- Pet a dog
- Feet on grass or sand
- Play with jewelry
- Twirl hair
- Rub face with washcloth
- Massage lotion on your hands
- Use a weighted lap pad/ blanket
- Squeeze stress ball
- Play with fidget
- Play with hair
- Rub different textures (rough, silky, etc.)



# Tracker for Sensory Strategies

We're all different; Be a Student of YOUR Body!

Level	Sensory Input	Level	How Long Do Changes Last?
3/10 so tired!	jumped on trampoline-5 min.	7/10	about 3 hours

-Record Starting Nervous System Level: 1/10- I'm almost asleep , 10/10- I'm SUPER elevated!

-Want to change it? Pick a sensory input!

-If you notice a change, record new level (if not record "no change")

- Record how long any changes last