

RIDING THE WAVES OF YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM



CALM WATERS

regulated
connected
present

CHOPPY WAVES

fight or flight
anxious
agitated



UNDER THE SURFACE

shutdown
disconnected
numb



RIDE THE WAVE
Abeablogr

Ride the Wave: Understanding Your Stress Response

Just like the ocean, our stress response has changing tides, some days feel calm and steady, while others bring big waves or moments where we feel pulled under.

These shifts are normal — your body is simply responding to what's happening around (and inside) you.

The goal isn't to fight the waves, but to recognize where you are and find ways to ride them with care.

Calm Waters – Feeling Safe and Steady

When the water is calm, you feel grounded, present, and connected. Your thoughts flow easily, your body feels at ease, and you can enjoy the moment. This is when you feel like yourself — balanced and able to handle what comes your way.

🌞 You're upright on the surfboard — balanced, aware, and moving with the rhythm of life.

You might notice:

- Easy breathing and steady energy
- Feeling open, curious, or content
- Able to rest, focus, and connect with others

Try this:

- **Savor the calm.** Pause to notice what safety feels like in your body.
- **Nourish connection.** Spend time with people or activities that help you stay balanced.

Choppy Waves – Fight or Flight

When the waves pick up, your body gets ready for action. You might feel tense, restless, or on edge — ready to fight through or paddle away. This is your body's way of protecting you when it senses challenge or pressure.

 In this state, the goal isn't to stop the waves — it's to steady your stance and help your body ride out the surge of energy.

Fight mode:

- Feels like irritation, anger, or frustration
- Energy builds — you might feel the need to push, fix, or control
- Muscles tighten and breathing becomes shallow

Flight mode:

- Feels like worry, panic, or urgency
- Energy speeds up — you might rush, avoid, or overthink
- Hard to rest or slow down

Try this:

- **Ground through your senses.** Name five things you see, four you can touch, three you can hear.
- **Move the energy.** Take a short walk, stretch, or shake out your hands to help the tension release.
- **Exhale longer.** Slow your breathing — long out-breaths signal your body it's safe to ease up.

Under the Surface – Collapse or Shutdown

When the waves feel too strong, your system might pull you under to protect you. You may feel numb, heavy, or disconnected — like you're underwater watching life from below. It's your body's way of saying, "I need a break."

 *In this place, energy feels low and everything slows down — gentle movement and small steps help you rise back toward the surface.*

You might notice:

- Feeling drained or spaced out
- Moving or thinking slowly
- Wanting to withdraw or be alone

Try this:

- **Use gentle movement.** Stand, stretch, or walk slowly to help energy return.
- **Engage one sense.** Play music, open a window, or hold something with texture.
- **Reach for connection.** Send a text or sit near someone you trust — even quiet presence helps you re-engage.

Riding the Wave

Every wave — calm, choppy, or deep — is part of being human.

Your body isn't broken; it's responding. By noticing where you are and using small, caring actions, you help your system find balance again.

"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf" – Jon Kabat-Zinn