

IMPERIAL

10-14
FEB
2025
South
Kensington
Campus

Learning Well Programme

DESIGNED FOR ALL IMPERIAL STUDENTS

Craft your personal journey to success

Connect study strategies with positive mental wellbeing

Foster wellbeing through effective learning practices

Explore the Learning Well Project student resources



SCAN HERE

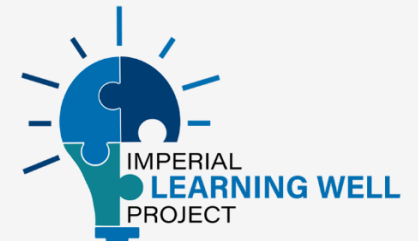


What's your body telling you?

Facilitators: Abby Sanderson & Joe McCoy

Move Imperial & Student Services

13/02/2025



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Pre-session Check-in Exercise

Imperial students -

To support you to get the most from the Learning Well Programme, please take a moment to complete this short exercise about your current understanding and expectations of this session:

- Your responses will be submitted anonymously.
- There are no right or wrong answers – feel free to share your thoughts.
- This activity should take no more than 2-3mins.

Learning Well Programme: Pre-session Check-in Exercise

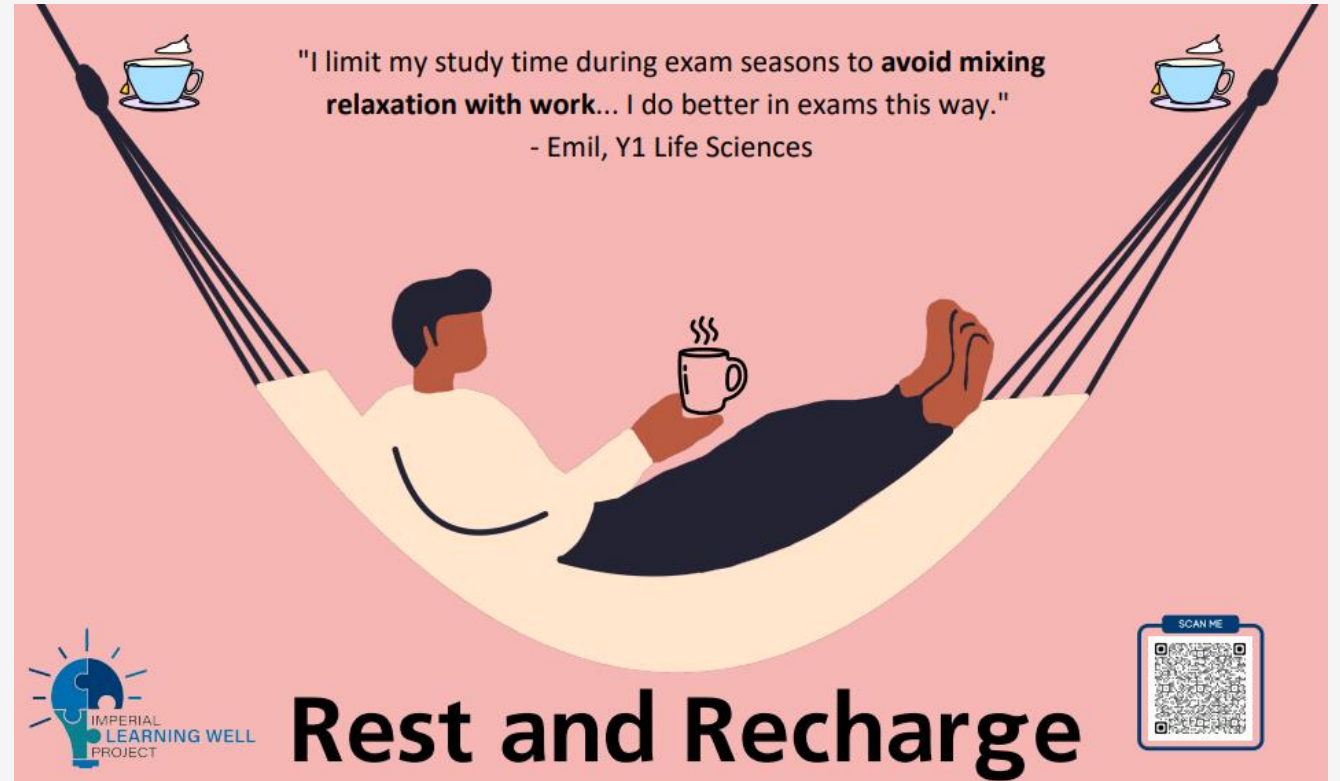
(THURSDAY)



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Introduction

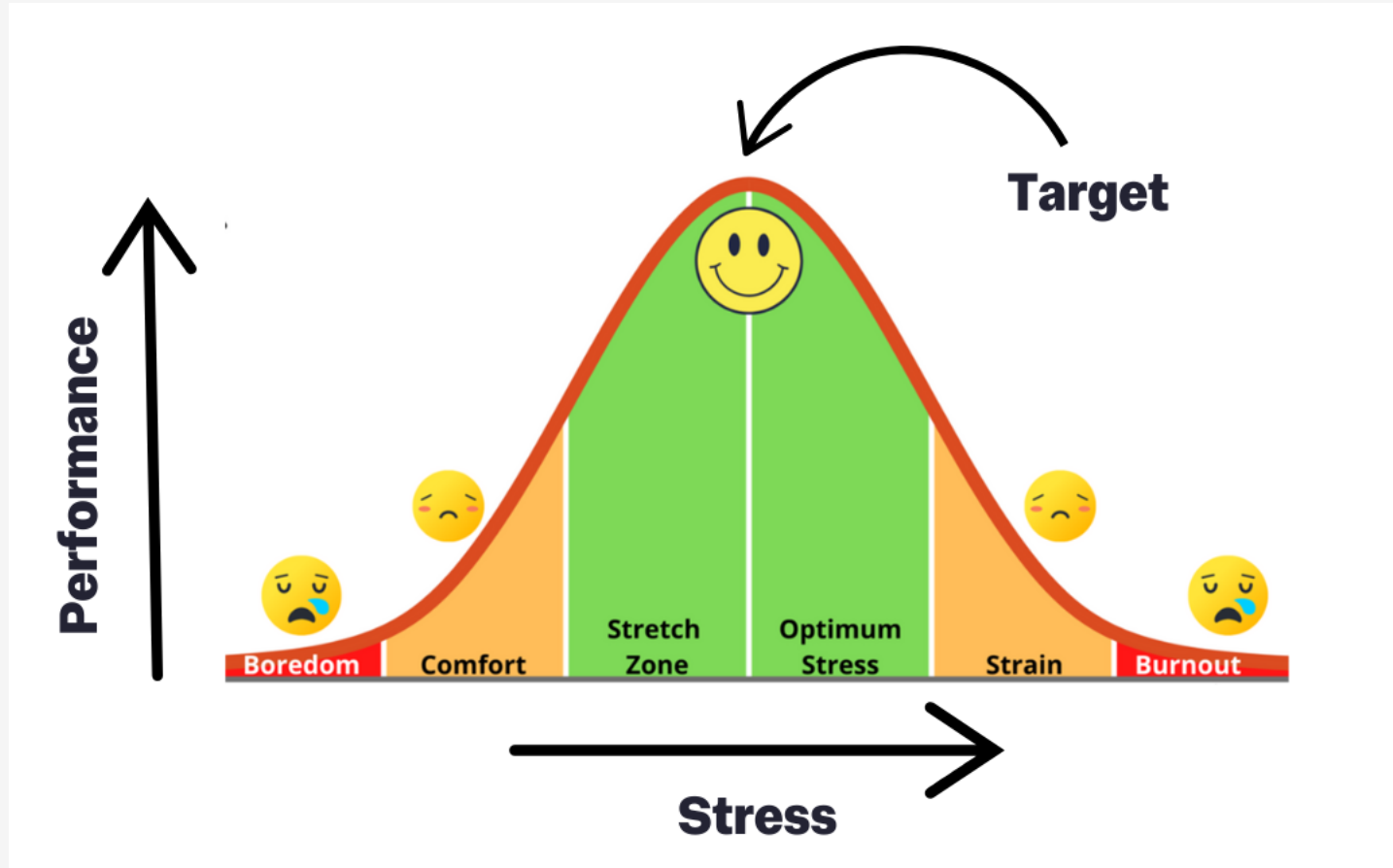
- Welcome!
- Stress Performance curve
- Brain benefits of physical activity
 - Invitation to get moving
- Polyvagal theory
 - Invitation for relaxation / guided meditation
- Sharing of resources and next steps!
- Questions



Imperial Learning Well Project Materials

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Stress Performance Curve



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Areas of the brain effected by exercise

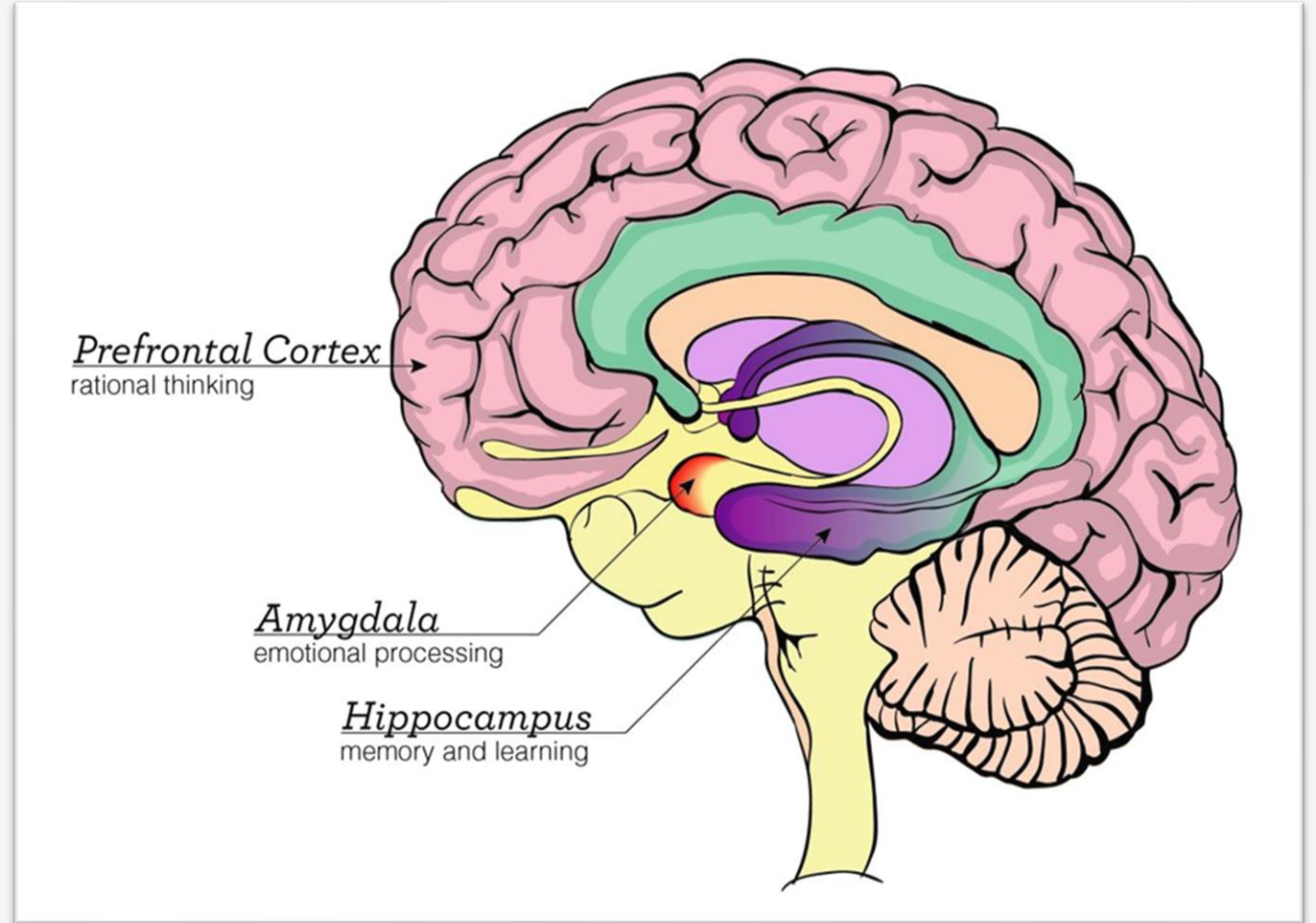
Prefrontal Cortex –

primary function in decision making, rational thinking and focus / attention

Hippocampus -

forming and retrieving memories, spatial navigation, and emotional responses.

The benefits of exercise have been linked but not limited to these two regions.



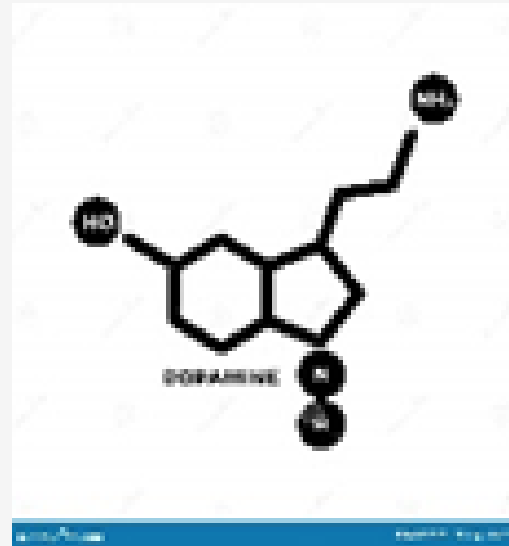
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Increase levels of neurotransmitters:

Serotonin



Dopamine



Norepinephrine



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What can we do to increase movement / physical activity



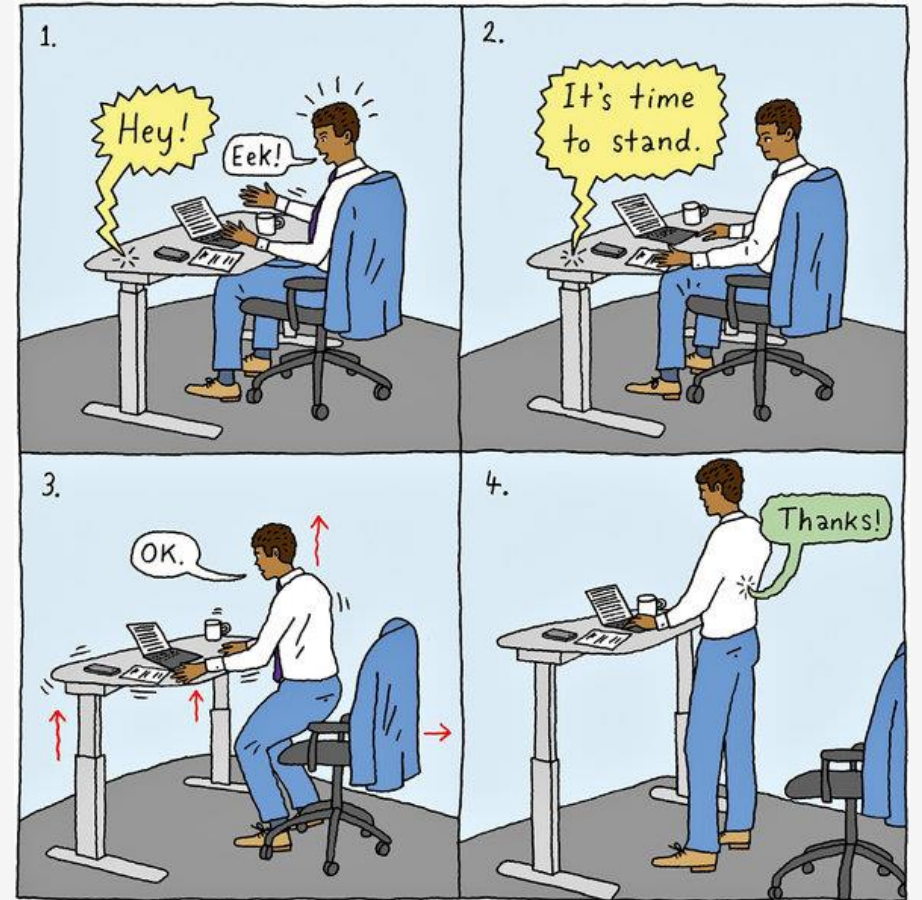
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Importance of movement and breaking sedentary behaviours

Deskercise disrupts this sedentary cycle, boosting blood flow and combatting the harmful effects of static posture.

Prolonged sitting with poor posture can put a significant amount of load on the spinal cord, shoulders, and hips. This can lead to lower back pain .

Persistent postural misalignment can result in muscle fatigue, tightening of hip flexors, reduced spine flexibility, weakening of gluteal buttock muscle, as well as weakening of the bones (osteoporosis).

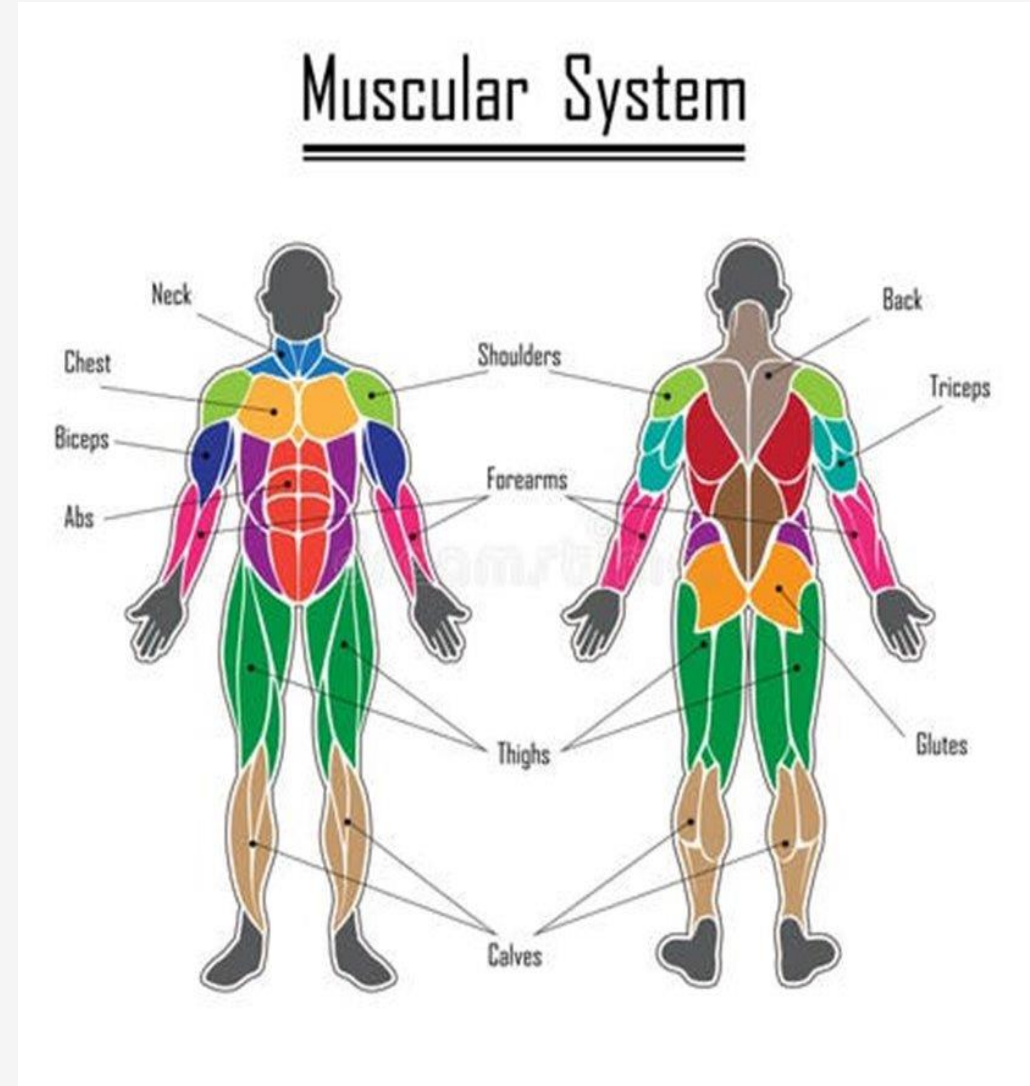


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Start from the ground and work up!

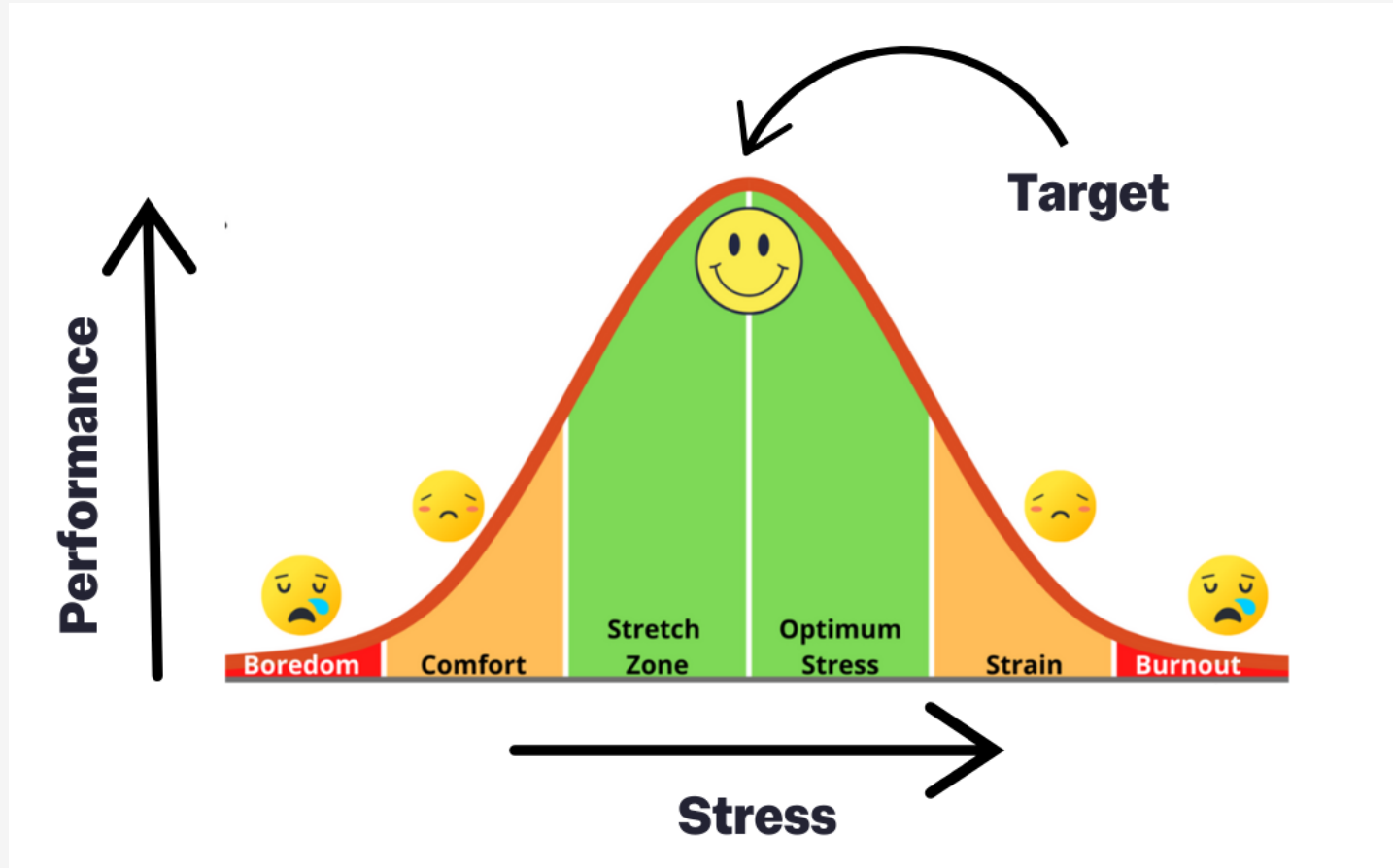
- Calves - calf raises (standing and seated)
- Thighs (Quads) – leg extension & Squat hover
- Glutes hamstrings – Deadlifts
- Back(spine) – chair rotations
- Shoulders/traps – Arm circles & shrugs
- Neck – side bends, chin tuck

Limited space ? Try Isometric exercises*



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Stress Performance Curve Revisited



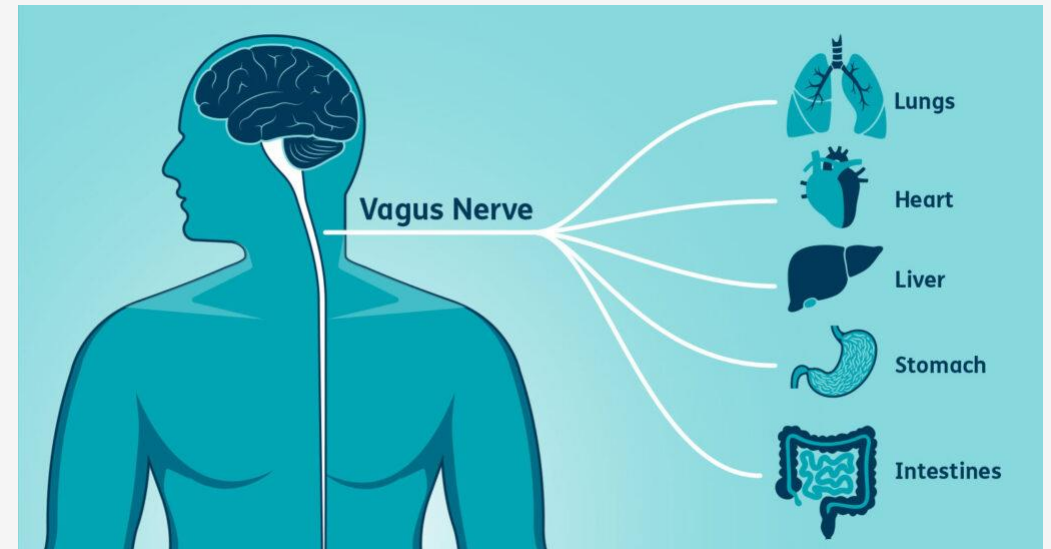
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Polyvagal Theory

Vagus Nerve: The longest cranial nerve, connecting the brain to major organs.

Why is the Vagus Nerve important?

- Activates the parasympathetic nervous system
- Helps balance the body's response to stress by calming the “fight or flight” response
- By stimulating the vagus nerve, it promotes relaxation and a sense of calm
- Improving vagal tone helps us better manage stress



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How do you stimulate the vagus nerve?

Discuss in pairs. Think about the following:

- What do you do to relax?
- What helps if you are feeling overwhelmed?
- What activities or lifestyle habits contribute to stress?



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Stimulating the vagus nerve

Activities that help:

- Yoga
- Breathing exercises
- Mindfulness / Meditation
- Exercise
- Singing / Gargling
- Splash of cold water!

Things that affect vagus nerve stimulation:

- Stress / anxiety
- Overworking
- Lack of sleep
- Poor nutrition



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Mindfulness & Meditation

Regulation of emotions: helps calm the nervous system

Improves focus: encourages staying present, reducing overthinking and worry

Enhances self-awareness: improves body-mind connection, helping you respond to stress rather than react

Promotes relaxation: releases tension in the body and the mind



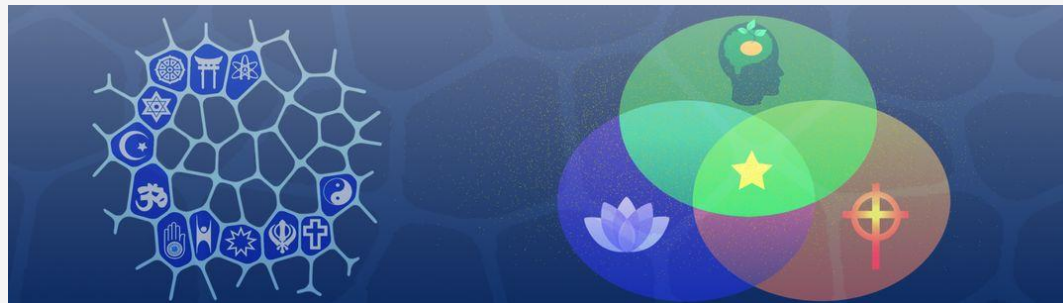
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Resources & next steps!

Enjoyed what you have learned today?

- [Move Imperial](#)
- [Student Support Zone](#)
- [Chaplaincy](#)

MOVE



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Post-session Reflection

Imperial students -

To help you maximise this learning opportunity, this activity is designed to support you to reflect on what you've learnt and to consider what you can personally take away from this session.

- Your responses will be submitted anonymously.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- This exercise should take no more than 3mins.
- We hope you find this activity helpful.

Learning Well Programme: Post-session Reflection Activity
(THURSDAY)

