

Fear and Fight or Flight

Our body feels everything. Our emotions are tied to physical responses in our bodies. As a result, the way our body functions and acts help shape the way we see and connect with the world around us. If our brain triggers a sad response, we feel that sadness physically in the form of tears or other triggered reactions. The connection between emotional and physical reactions in the body runs deep!

One primary example of this connection is fear. We know that emotional fear is connected to the body through responses such as increased heart rate. When we feel afraid, our body enters what is known as fight-or-flight mode. This is how our body reacts physiologically to anything that we feel threatened or under attack by in a survival effort. Studying the fight-or-flight response is not new, but that doesn't mean that there isn't more to be explored.

Recently, researchers analyzed fear in terms of exposure-based therapies. Exposure-based therapies are designed to help those who suffer from crippling anxiety and fears move past them to live a healthier, higher quality of life. What researchers ended up discovering is how deeply connected the Vagus nerve is to the fight-or-flight response.

Since we know that the nervous system is the root of all bodily functions, we know that the nervous system has a significant role in our fight-or-flight response, but the "how" hasn't always been clear.

For example, when the body is under stressful conditions, researchers have found that the Vagus nerve responds to the elevations in epinephrine. It then signals the brain to create new memories and store them while also triggering the body to slow down the sympathetic response. This demonstrates the crucial role that the Vagus nerve and nervous system can have in helping the body properly handle extreme stress or trauma.

The core function of the nervous system has been found time and time again to be impaired by subluxation. Regardless of the symptom, the more we learn about the Vagus Nerve, the more it makes sense that our friends and family should be checked for subluxation and adjusted by a chiropractor, when necessary so that they can live life at the fullest!

Noble, L. J., Souza, R. R., & McIntyre, C. K. (2019). Vagus nerve stimulation as a tool for enhancing extinction in exposure-based therapies. *Psychopharmacology*, 236(1), 355-367. doi:10.1007/s00213-018-4994-5



The nervous system is the primary driver of the "fight or flight" response of the body. It is crucial that we are checked for subluxation that can impact the nervous system so we can live fully!



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