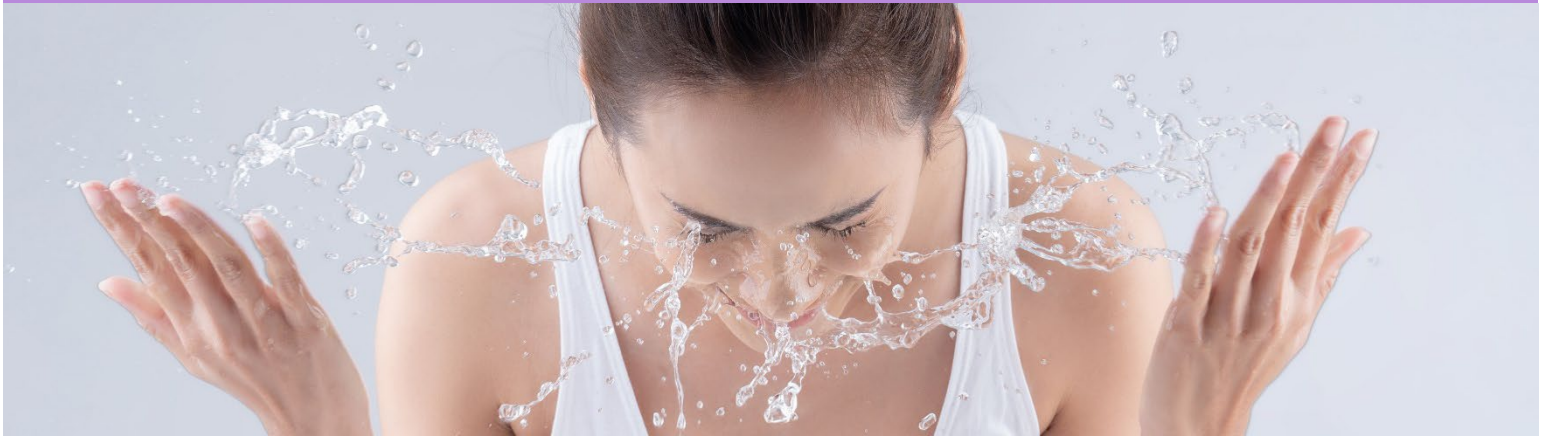


# Vagus Nerve Icing & TIPP

TEST TAKING



## What is it and why do I care?

The vagus nerve is the longest cranial nerve in your body. It connects your brain to parts of your body involved in things like breathing, cardiovascular activity, and digestion. It's also the main component of your parasympathetic nervous system. This system predominates in quiet "rest and digest" conditions and conserves energy.

The most effective way to kickstart your parasympathetic nerve response is through the Mammalian Dive Reflex (aka Dive Reflex). You do this by submerging your face in ice water and holding your breath for approximately 30 seconds.

Many things happen in response to the Dive Reflex, including distracting you from your anxiety-induced acute stress response (aka. fight or flight) which allows you to calm down. It can also trigger a pain-like response in your brain that forces your neurotransmitters to refocus. Specifically, blood goes from nonessential organs to essential ones (e.g. brain and heart) and your heart rate slows down. The combination of those changes can help you feel calmer.

## How do I use it?

On days you're experiencing heightened anxiety (e.g. tests, skills sign-off, etc.) you can engage your Dive Reflex before you come to school by submerging your face in ice water and holding your breath for approximately 30 seconds.

Unfortunately, it's rarely feasible to access ice water to trigger your Dive Reflex while at school. However, utilizing a frozen hot/cold pack, you can simulate the experience. To do this, place the frozen pack on the upper half of your face at about eye level, bend at the waist like you're leaning over a counter, and hold your breath for approximately 30 seconds. If your environment requires more subtlety, you can hold the pack at your chest, neck, or armpit; or you can simply keep it in your hands. If you can't have the frozen pack with you during the event, you could keep it for use before or after the stressful event.

Free hot/cold packs are available from the Student Success Coaches. Feel free to stop by and ask for one.

**WARNING:** If you have health conditions, especially cardiac issues or migraines, talk to a doctor before trying the Dive Reflex process.

## Want more stress reduction? Try TIPP.

Vagus nerve icing is the first step in a four-part skill set for improving distress tolerance – your ability cope with emotional distress – either actual or perceived. TIPP is an acronym that stands for temperature, intense exercise, paced breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation. To learn more about this skill set check out the link below.

## Video Resources

Overview: [https://youtu.be/wAoL0szw2\\_w?si=HQwTUq7ZezE9zOT3](https://youtu.be/wAoL0szw2_w?si=HQwTUq7ZezE9zOT3)

Mammalian Dive Reflex: <https://youtu.be/POXHQlgyExc?si=Y2sjNviSdIYCBfK3>

TIPP Skill Set: <https://youtu.be/Yf64blB4Du8>