

# Weekly Stress Reset Checklist

A 7-DAY EVIDENCE-BASED PROTOCOL FOR CORTISOL MANAGEMENT

calm-veritas.com

Chronic stress keeps cortisol elevated long after the stressor passes. This checklist maps one week of targeted daily actions — grounded in HPA-axis research — to gradually recalibrate your stress response. Each item takes under 10 minutes. Consistency matters more than intensity.

## Daily Anchors (Every Day)

---

- Morning light**  
10 min of outdoor light within 30 min of waking. Suppresses melatonin, sets cortisol peak early.
- Controlled breathing**  
4 min of box breathing (4-4-4-4) or physiological sigh. Activates vagal brake.
- No caffeine before 9:30 AM**  
Allow cortisol peak to complete naturally before adding caffeine (Dawson & Sakel, 2015).
- Movement**  
At minimum a 20-min walk. Exercise accelerates cortisol clearance and raises BDNF.
- Wind-down routine**  
Same 3 actions each night before bed. Behavioral cues reduce anticipatory cortisol.

## Mon / Wed / Fri – Active Recovery

---

- Cold finish in shower**  
30-sec cold at end. Triggers norepinephrine +200-300% (Shevchuk, 2008). Adapt over 2 weeks.
- Journaling — 3 gratitudes**  
Specificity matters. Write 3 distinct, specific things. Raises subjective wellbeing (Emmons, 2003).
- Digital sunset at 9 PM**  
Blue light delays melatonin 1.5-3 hrs (Harvard, 2015). Use blue-light glasses or warm-only screens.

## Tue / Thu / Sat – Nervous System Repair

---

- Yoga nidra or NSDR**  
20-min non-sleep deep rest. Restores dopamine and reduces cortisol (Huberman Lab, 2021).
- Social connection**  
15+ min of face-to-face (or voice) contact. Oxytocin directly suppresses HPA-axis activation.
- Magnesium glycinate at night**