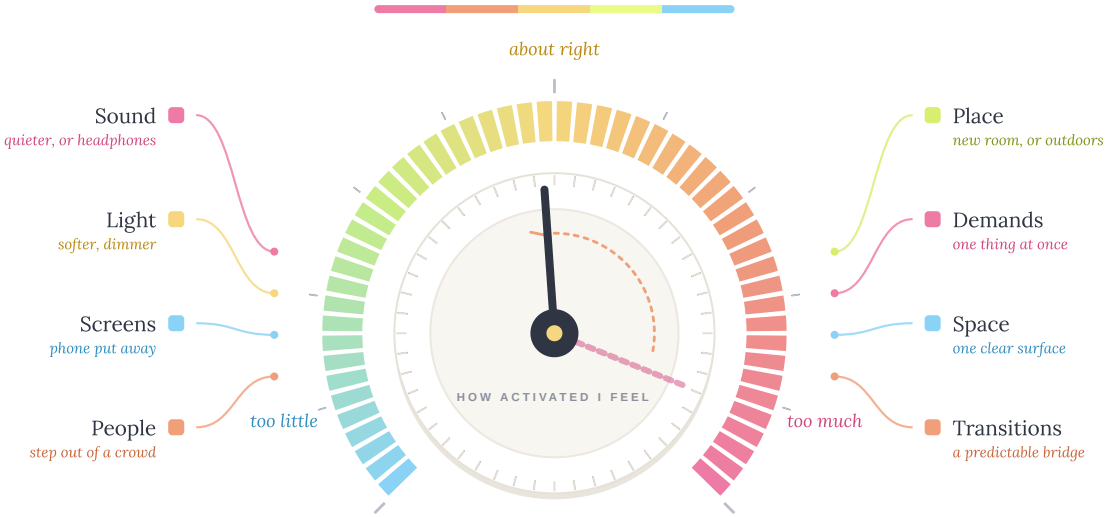
Environmental Regulation

Often overlooked: sometimes the quickest change is to what's around you

We often try to settle ourselves from the inside, with breathing or thinking differently. But noise, light, screens, people and competing demands all add to how activated we feel. Adjusting your surroundings is a legitimate, practical way to regulate, and it can make other strategies easier to use.



EIGHT CHANNELS, ONE DIAL

dashed: where I was · solid: a few channels turned a notch

No single change fixes it. A few channels turned a notch can bring the whole dial back into range.

01 My environment check

some channels may need turning up, not down

CHANNEL	RIGHT NOW, THIS NEEDS TO…	ONE SMALL ADJUSTMENT I COULD MAKE
Sound	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	
Light	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	
Screens	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	
People	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	
Place	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	
Demands	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	
Space	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	
Transitions	☐ turn down ☐ about right ☐ turn up	

02 A predictable transition

a small bridge between activities

1 · CLOSE
How I'll finish what I'm doing

→

2 · PAUSE
A short, familiar in-between

→

3 · BEGIN
How I'll start the next thing

03 Knowing my places

what turns the volume up, and what turns it down

Places and settings that tend to steady me
a room, a route, a time of day, a sound

Places and settings that turn my volume up fast
and one way I could prepare for them

Worth knowing Research suggests natural settings may help restore attention (Kaplan, 1995), and that regulating well is about choosing what fits the moment (Aldao et al., 2015). Changing your environment isn't avoidance when it helps you return to what matters; it's using every tool available. And sometimes the right move is turning something up: more light, gentle sound, or company.

SOURCES

Aldao, A., Sheppes, G., & Gross, J. J. (2015). Emotion regulation flexibility. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 39(3), 263–278.

Kaplan, S. (1995). The restorative benefits of nature: Toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15(3), 169–182.

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