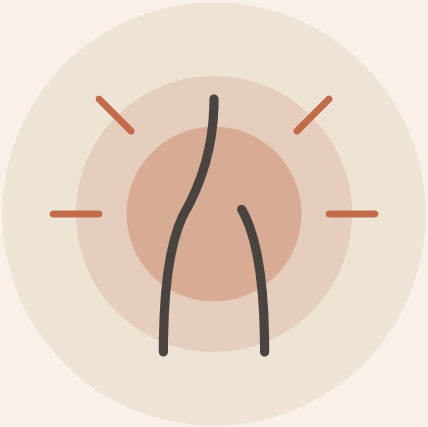
Holistic Abby

MOLD HEALING · HEALTHY HOME · FAITH & FAMILY



a gentle nervous system reset

The Red Light Neck Reset

Why I love red light on the back of my neck,
and how I make it part of my evening wind-down

BY ABBY VALDEZ

A gentle note: I'm not a doctor, and this isn't medical advice. Everything I share comes from my own family's experience and hundreds of hours of research, walking alongside my own doctors. Please talk with your healthcare provider before making changes to your health care.

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hi friend

Why the back of my neck?

When I was deep in my mold journey, my body felt stuck in "go" mode all the time. Learning to help my nervous system feel safe became one of the most important parts of my healing season, and this little ritual is legitimately one of my favorite resets.

A little anatomy

- **The vagus nerve** is the main nerve of your "rest and digest" (parasympathetic) system. It travels from the brainstem down each side of the neck, alongside the carotid artery, on its way to the heart and gut.
- **The base of the skull and upper spine** sit right where many of us hold tension, and they're close to the brainstem, where the vagus nerve begins.

What the research says (so far)

Red and near-infrared light therapy is also called **photobiomodulation**. It has been studied for things like tissue repair and inflammation. Its effect on the nervous system is much newer territory:

- Early research suggests light may influence vagal activity, often measured as heart rate variability (HRV). One study found that adding near-infrared light to room lighting raised resting HRV.[1]
- A 2025 review found that warm, low-intensity light (like red) showed *potential* to support HRV, but the studies were small and mixed.[2]
- A small trial shining light near the vagus nerve under the ear found only minimal changes.[3]

> My honest take: the science is early and promising, not proven. What I *know* is that slowing down in that warm glow helps me feel calmer, and that matters too. 🤍

[1] Effects of near-infrared radiation in ambient lighting on cognitive performance, emotion, and HRV, J Environ Psychol, 2024. [2] Effects of light exposure on vagally-mediated HRV: a systematic review, Neurosci Biobehav Rev, 2025. [3] Effects of acute photobiomodulation on HRV in physically active individuals (randomized trial preprint), 2025.

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my simple routine

How I use it

I think of this as a calming evening wind-down, not a chore. Here's what it looks like for me:

1. **Set the scene.** After the kids are in bed, I dim the overhead lights, put my phone down and get comfortable sitting up.

2. **Position the light.** I rest my Lumebox on the back of my neck so the warm glow reaches my neck and upper shoulders.

   Shop my Lumebox →

3. **Breathe slow.** In through my nose, then a long, slow exhale, longer than the inhale.

4. **Pray or hum.** Some nights I pray through my day and give it to the Lord. Other nights I hum a worship song quietly.

5. **Notice.** When I'm done I sit for a moment and notice my shoulders, my jaw and my breath before heading to bed.

> It doesn't have to be perfect. A few calm minutes in the glow is a gift you give your body.

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stack your resets

Pair it with these

Humming

The vagus nerve connects to the muscles of the throat and vocal cords, so humming is a gentle way to "talk" to it. Humming has also been shown to raise nitric oxide in the nose.[4] Try a favorite hymn.

Slow exhale breathing

Slowing your breath, especially the exhale, is one of the best-studied ways to support HRV and that calm, parasympathetic state.[5]

Prayer

"Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Bringing my worries to the Lord is the reset beneath every other reset for me.

A few safety notes

- **Protect your eyes.** Close them or wear the goggles that come with your device, and never look directly into the light.
- **Check with a functional medicine doctor or naturopath first** if you're pregnant, have a light-sensitive condition, or take medications that make you sensitive to light.
- Always follow your device's instructions.

This guide shares my personal experience and is for education only. It isn't medical advice, so please talk with a functional medicine doctor or naturopath about your own needs.

[4] Weitzberg & Lundberg, Am J Respir Crit Care Med, 2002. [5] Zaccaro et al., Front Hum Neurosci, 2018.

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want to try it?

The Lumebox I use

I use a Lumebox for this evening neck reset. If you'd like to try one, you can shop through my link.

Shop my Lumebox →

It helps support my little family business at no extra cost to you.

Affiliate link: I may earn a small commission.

Want more ways to wind down? I share breath, grounding, stillness, and prayer practices.

Want the next steps?

Nervous System Regulation & Mental Clarity

- Mostly free resets you can do anywhere: breathwork, humming, tapping, prayer, and stillness
- No fancy gadgets needed, just simple practices that helped me find my calm again
- Gentle tools for anxiety, fearful thoughts, and that "stuck on high alert" feeling
- Faith-first calm, with plenty of room if prayer feels new to you
- A printable Daily Calm Plan to help you build these into your everyday rhythm
- 29 pages, and it downloads instantly

Get my Nervous System & Mental Clarity guide

With love & prayers,

Abby

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