

# Module 1: Understanding the Body's Signals

## Introduction

**What your body is trying to tell you: the good, the helpful, and the “hey, let’s tweak that” moments.**

Many people think body awareness is only about spotting problems, but your body has so much more to say. Your body is always giving you feedback. Sometimes it’s clear. Sometimes it’s subtle. It might be a stretch that feels amazing, a heavy sensation after a big day, or tension you didn’t realise was there until you paused.

This module is here to help you get curious about what you feel. The aim is not to overanalyse or worry, but to build trust in what your body is telling you, both the supportive signs and the discomfort.

## Why This Matters

Your nervous system is constantly scanning your environment. It’s not just looking for danger, it’s also searching for comfort and safety. It does this through breath, posture, movement, temperature, and even skin sensitivity.

If you’ve ever thought:

- "I feel off, but I don’t know why."
- "I didn’t realise how tight I was until someone touched me."
- "That stretch felt so good, I didn’t know I needed it."

Then you’ve already experienced body signals in action.

Learning to understand those signals isn’t about needing to know everything. It’s about recognising when something is working for you, when it’s time to shift, and when a bit of extra care might help.

## What You’ll Learn

By the end of this module, you’ll be able to:

- Understand what body signals are and why they’re not always a problem.
- Tell the difference between helpful discomfort and something that needs more attention.
- Recognise what positive signals feel like in your body.
- Notice patterns with calm confidence.

- Try a simple three step check-in that helps you understand what your body needs today.
- Use a body mapping tool to find your own common signal zones.

## What Is a Body Signal?

A body signal is any physical sensation that stands out to you, even briefly. These sensations help your body and brain communicate. Think of them like a message or a soft nudge, saying, "Hey, notice this."

Signals might feel like:

- A tight jaw during a busy day.
- A warm feeling in your chest after a laugh.
- A heavy shoulder after too much time at your desk.
- A relaxed belly after a few deep breaths.

These sensations are often your body's way of checking in. They let you know how you're coping and help you decide what you might need next.

You can group most signals into three types:

### Supportive Signals

These are the sensations that tell you things are working well. They help you feel steady, calm, mobile or energised.

#### Examples:

- Soft shoulders
- A deep, easy breath
- A clear head after movement
- A light or open feeling after a good stretch

Supportive signals often go unnoticed because they feel fine. But they're important, they show what's working and remind you what your body enjoys.

### Helpful Signals

These are gentle nudges. They don't mean anything is wrong, but they do suggest it might be time to pause, shift, or rest.

#### Examples:

- Neck stiffness after a long drive
- Buzzing legs after standing too long

- A clenched jaw during a stressful conversation

Helpful signals are like an internal suggestion box. Your body is asking for a small change. Your body's saying, 'Let's shift something.' Whether that's a breath, a stretch, or simply noticing these cues can guide you toward small, meaningful changes.

### **Persistent or Sharp Signals**

These are the sensations that are louder and stick around longer. They may affect how you move, sleep or feel overall.

#### **Examples:**

- A sharp pinch when turning your neck
- Pain that shows up repeatedly in one area
- Tingling or weakness in the hands or feet
- Discomfort that affects your breathing or posture

These signals aren't always a sign of something serious, but they are worth noticing and possibly talking about with a health professional.

## **Your Body's Favourite Ways of Talking**

Everyone has areas in their body that speak up first when something is off. These are often referred to as signal zones.

#### **For example:**

- Shoulders that tighten when life gets busy
- Feet that ache after a full day
- A clenched jaw when feeling overwhelmed
- A sore lower back when sitting for too long

These aren't problems, they're patterns. They're your body's way of saying, "Hey, this is where I carry things."

You also have zones that help you feel strong, calm or supported. These get less attention but are just as important.

#### **Supportive examples:**

- "I breathe easier when I'm outside."
- "My hips feel looser after a gentle walk."
- "My shoulders drop when I stretch my back."

Start noticing both. Your signal zones show you where tension builds. Your supportive zones show you what helps you reset.

You'll get a worksheet in this module to track both types, and over time you'll build your own personal body map.

## When a Signal Deserves More Attention

Your body shifts and changes all day long. A little tightness or fatigue isn't unusual and it often settles with rest, movement, or awareness.

But sometimes, a signal sticks around, gets stronger, or begins to impact your daily life. These are important moments to pause, listen in, and ask whether extra care might be needed.

Here are some signs that a body signal might deserve closer attention:

- A new sensation that hasn't eased after a few days.
- Discomfort that keeps coming back in the same area.
- Pain or tightness that affects how you move, sleep, or feel.
- A change in sensation, like weakness, tingling, or numbness.
- Fatigue or tension that feels "out of the blue" and doesn't improve.

These don't automatically mean something is wrong, but they are your body's way of saying, "Please check in." That could mean adjusting how you move or rest, but it might also mean reaching out to your GP, physio, or another trusted healthcare provider.

**This course is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment.** If something feels unusual, persistent, or is affecting your quality of life, please don't push through or guess. Getting the right support early is a sign of strength, not failure. It's always better to get on top of things sooner, rather than wait until something has progressed and becomes harder to manage.

The goal here isn't to worry you, it's to help you feel more confident in knowing what your body is asking for, and when to seek extra support.

You don't have to figure it all out on your own and you don't have to wait until things are unbearable to deserve care.

## Tool 1: "The 3-Part Body Check-In"

A 60-second habit to build trust with your body.

### Why this matters:

Your body sends little updates all day long but most of us are too busy, distracted, or tired to notice. This simple check-in helps you *pause and listen* without overthinking.

It's not about fixing anything. It's about noticing what's true, so you can support yourself earlier and more gently.

### How to do it:

1. **Pause and breathe.**

You can do this sitting, standing, or lying down.

Take a soft breath in and let your shoulders drop as you exhale.

2. **Ask yourself these three questions:**

- **Where do I feel okay or even good today?**

Start here. This helps your brain register safety and steadiness, which builds confidence and calm.

- **What feels a little off, tight, or tired?**

Don't try to fix it right away. Just gently name what you notice.

- **Is anything new, different, or repeating?**

These patterns are your early clues they help you catch things before they escalate.

3. **That's it.**

No judgment. No deep analysis. Just a moment of real connection.

### What this does:

This tool builds **interoception**, your ability to sense and understand what's going on inside your body. And that's the foundation for better movement, recovery, and regulation.

It can help you:

- Spot fatigue before you burn out
- Notice where you're carrying stress
- Appreciate what's *actually working* in your body
- Make choices from awareness, not autopilot

### When to use it:

- First thing in the morning
- After a long workday
- Before or after a massage
- During stressful moments
- Before exercise or stretching

The more often you do this, the easier it gets.

And the better you'll become at knowing what your body's asking for, before it has to shout.

## Tool 2: The “Sit and Sense” Scan

A 2-minute posture-based awareness tool to spot early signals.

Why this matters:

Many clients don’t realise how much their **posture, breath, or body language** is influenced by what they’re feeling, until they pause. This tool helps you gently observe how your body is *actually sitting, holding, or settling* in real time.

You don’t need a yoga mat or mirror, just a moment of stillness and curiosity.

How to do it:

1. **Find a seat.** Sit comfortably on a chair, with your feet flat on the floor and your hands resting loosely in your lap.
2. **Notice your contact points.**  
Where does your body touch the chair or ground?  
Can you feel equal weight through your feet?  
Are you leaning to one side without realising?
3. **Check your spine.**  
Are you slouching, stiff, or bracing anywhere?  
Can you soften just a little, without “fixing” anything?
4. **Notice your breath.**  
Is it shallow or deep? High in the chest or low in the belly?  
Let it settle without trying to control it.
5. **Scan for support.**  
What feels okay or even good right now?  
Is there lightness anywhere, even in your fingers, jaw, or shoulders?
6. **Scan for tension.**  
Is anything clenching, gripping, or holding on?  
Ask, “Can this soften a little?”
7. **Take one shift.**  
Gently adjust one thing:  
uncross your legs, drop your shoulders, move your head slowly side-to-side, or change your position.

**What this does:**

This tool works like a gentle mirror. You’re not judging your posture or trying to sit right, you’re simply observing what your body is doing when you’re not paying attention.

Over time, this awareness can help you:

- Catch tension before it becomes pain

- Notice habits like leaning, clenching, or bracing
- Support more relaxed, efficient posture
- Develop a stronger sense of groundedness in daily life

#### **When to use it:**

- At your desk
- While waiting in the car (not while driving)
- After getting home
- Before or after a treatment
- Anytime you feel “off” but don’t know why

Even 60 seconds of this practice can bring you back into your body in a calm, safe way, without needing to “do” anything.

## **What’s Next**

Well done you’ve taken the first step in tuning in to your body’s signals.

By now, you’re starting to notice that your body isn’t just “doing random things”, it’s communicating. You’ve learned how to listen without panic, spot helpful patterns, and check in with curiosity rather than criticism.

Next, in **Module 2: Understanding Pain (and Why It’s Not Always What You Think)**, we’ll take this even further.

You’ll learn:

- The difference between pain and damage, and why they’re not always the same
- How to use the **Traffic Light Model** to make sense of sensations without spiralling into fear or overthinking
- When it’s time to rest, when to move, and when to reach out for professional support
- How to stop ignoring discomfort *and* stop overreacting to it, finding a steady, informed middle ground

This next module is all about taking the signals you’ve started noticing, and learning what to *do* with them. It’s one of the most empowering pieces in your self-care toolkit.

#### **Just a Reminder**

This course is not a substitute for medical care and it's not about doing it all alone. If something feels off, or your body is sending signals that stick around, reach out. The goal here is to help you *recognise early*, not ignore.