

Sympathetic nervous system

The sympathetic [nervous system](#) is one of the two main divisions of the [autonomic nervous system](#), the other being the [parasympathetic nervous system](#).

The autonomic nervous system functions to regulate the body's unconscious actions. The sympathetic nervous system's primary process is to stimulate the body's fight-or-flight response. It is, however, constantly active at a basic level to maintain homeostasis.

The sympathetic nervous system is complementary to the parasympathetic nervous system which stimulates the body to “rest and digest” or “feed and breed”.

The name of this system can be traced to the concept of sympathy, in the sense of “connection between parts”, first used medically by Galen. In the 18th century, Winslow applied the term specifically to [nerves](#).

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