

## What Does My HRV Tell Me (in Simple Terms)?

- HRV is a “view” into what your nervous system is doing. There are two branches of the nervous system that work together to stay balanced. When you are stressed, one branch of your nervous system, the “fight or flight” branch, becomes very active. When this happens, HRV goes down and represents imbalance between the two branches. When the stressful situation passes, HRV goes up as the nervous system returns to normal.
- High HRV is a sign of calm and low HRV is a sign of stress. The good news is that there are many simple solutions, such as deep breathing, that helps restore calm and increase HRV.
- Take the example of a rubber band. An old, stiff rubber band cannot stretch very well, whereas a new, fresh rubber band can stretch in many directions and return to its original shape. A regular heart beat (low HRV) is like an old rubber band that does not stretch, while a heart beat with lots of variation (high HRV) is like a new, stretchy rubber band. A healthy body, like a new rubber

band, is able to respond to a wide variety of environmental and psychological situations and quickly return to normal (referred to as resilience). So high HRV is a sign of health and resilience.