

## 1: How Big is Mars? | Size of Planet Mars

*"When folks harp on the harm we do to the planet, we feel bad and want to do something to feel better - and then we tune out," the article says. "But if we have a positive goal in mind that we can take small, manageable steps toward, we feel good - and are more likely to keep going."*

The vagus nerve, the longest of the cranial nerves, controls your inner nerve center—the parasympathetic nervous system. And it oversees a vast range of crucial functions, communicating motor and sensory impulses to every organ in your body. New research has revealed that it may also be the missing link to treating chronic inflammation, and the beginning of an exciting new field of treatment for serious, incurable diseases. Here are nine facts about this powerful nerve bundle. A certain amount of inflammation after injury or illness is normal. But an overabundance is linked to many diseases and conditions, from sepsis to the autoimmune condition rheumatoid arthritis. The vagus nerve operates a vast network of fibers stationed like spies around all your organs. A University of Virginia study in rats showed that stimulating their vagus nerves strengthened their memory. The action released the neurotransmitter norepinephrine into the amygdala, which consolidated memories. The neurotransmitter acetylcholine, elicited by the vagus nerve, tells your lungs to breathe. You can, however, also stimulate your vagus nerve by doing abdominal breathing or holding your breath for four to eight counts. By measuring the time between your individual heart beats, and then plotting this on a chart over time, doctors can determine your heart rate variability, or HRV. This data can offer clues about the resilience of your heart and vagus nerve. When your ever-vigilant sympathetic nervous system revs up the fight or flight responses—pouring the stress hormone cortisol and adrenaline into your body—the vagus nerve tells your body to chill out by releasing acetylcholine. People with a stronger vagus response may be more likely to recover more quickly after stress, injury, or illness. Your gut feelings are very real. During extreme syncope, blood flow is restricted to your brain, and you lose consciousness. But most of the time you just have to sit or lie down for the symptoms to subside. Neurosurgeon Kevin Tracey was the first to show that stimulating the vagus nerve can significantly reduce inflammation. Results on rats were so successful, he reproduced the experiment in humans with stunning results. The creation of implants to stimulate the vagus nerve via electronic implants showed a drastic reduction, and even remission, in rheumatoid arthritis—which has no known cure and is often treated with the toxic drugs—hemorrhagic shock, and other equally serious inflammatory syndromes. Spurred on by the success of vagal nerve stimulation to treat inflammation and epilepsy, a burgeoning field of medical study, known as bioelectronics, may be the future of medicine. Using implants that deliver electric impulses to various body parts, scientists and doctors hope to treat illness with fewer medications and fewer side effects.

## 2: Is It True What They Say About Guys With Big Feet? | Mental Floss

*This bat has big feet for its size - while its wingspan may be 28 cm, its feet may be over 8 cm long. At night, it glides over the surface of rivers and streams, dragging its toes through the water and snatching small fish that are near the surface with its long, curved claws.*

## 3: How Big Is Pluto? - The Density, Mass and Volume Explained

*A woman with small feet has a collection of shoes? Yes I have shoes that I wear, only summertimes!*

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