

## The Five-Finger Relaxation Technique

Ever feel anxiety during a test or exam? One way that might help reduce the stress or anxiety that you are feeling is to use the “Five-Finger Relaxation Technique” (Davis, et al., 2008, p. 90). It is simple and only takes a few minutes.



Begin by closing your eyes and trying to shut out any external sounds or noises. Using either your right or left hands (or both), you will touch one finger at a time to your thumb. Spend 30 to 60 seconds on each thought, using these basis instructions:

1. **Index Finger | Physical Fatigue or Tiredness.** While touching your index finger to your thumb, go back in time. Think about:
  - A time when you had just engaged in some type of exhilarating physical activity.
  - Remember how it felt to have spent so much energy while not overdoing it.
  - Breathe deeply, remember how your muscles felt tired and the sense of accomplishment of having done something rewarding and exhausting.
2. **Middle Finger | Love or Positive Emotion.** While touching your middle finger to your thumb, think of:
  - A time when you felt a strong closeness to someone else.
  - When you had a warm or loving embrace.
  - The look in the eye of the other person in that moment.
3. **Ring Finger | Compliment.** Touch your ring finger to your thumb and think back to a time when you:
  - Received a sincere and meaningful compliment.
  - Worked extra hard to do something nice for someone else and they recognized what you had done and were sincerely grateful.
4. **Little Finger | Nature and Beauty.** Using your little finger, touch your thumb and think about a time when:
  - You were in a beautiful outdoor place and were looking at the majesty of the skies, the mountains, the fields, the desert, or another place that you have been that was beautiful.
  - Contemplate the smells and the sounds of the day with the colors, the breeze, the sounds, the textures, and the light.

Open your eyes and return your focus to the task at hand remembering the many amazing things that you have already accomplished in life.

Adapted from Davis, M., Eshelman, E.R. & McKay, M. (2008). *The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Oakland, CA. New Harbinger