

## **RELAXATION TECHNIQUES: THE FIVE FINGER TECHNIQUE**

Are you interested in relaxing quickly and yet efficiently? Like most relaxation techniques, the next exercise is simple, but that doesn't mean it will be as easy for you to relax. Any ability, and in our case relaxation, requires time and involvement.

This technique only takes a few minutes and can help you control your test anxiety. It can be used when you are waiting for an exam, when you are on your way to an important interview, or when you feel stuck because of your emotions.

1. Close your eyes

2. Join the thumb with the index finger

During this time, go back in time and remember a time when your body felt a pleasant physical fatigue. Maybe one day you did some physical activity and in the end you enjoyed the fatigue you felt in your body and that made you have a deep and restful sleep. Try to relive that feeling now. Let your body feel that pleasant fatigue, just enjoy that state.

3. Join your thumb with your middle finger

Think about when you have completed a major project. When you graduated or when you accomplished a goal, when you gave birth, or when you managed to raise a sum of money for the house you dreamed of. Try to find something for which you made a considerable effort and relive the emotion you had at the end when everything was fulfilled.

Enjoy that state.

4. Join your thumb with the ring finger

Think you've reached the most beautiful place you've ever been. Pay attention to everything around you using all your senses: with your mind's eye, analyze the full beauty of the place, touch and feel the texture of the things around you, smell the place and listen to its sounds.

Enjoy that state / feeling.

5. Join the thumb with the little finger

When you feel that the two fingers have joined, think of the most beautiful compliment anyone has ever given you. Live the joy you felt hearing those words. Accept them now and let your body be carried away by emotion.

Enjoy that state / feeling.

Practiced daily, the exercise can help you relax easily, efficiently and quickly. You can also use this technique during breaks from work or school, giving you "time-out" moments to recharge your batteries. This will allow you to reduce the level of stress you feel and increase the performance of your activities.

(Adapted from Davis et al., *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook*)