

How To Manage Exam Stress Smoothly And Easily...

For any student, the platform of competitive education rests on three legs:

1. How do I get incredibly excited to learn a subject – instead of forcing myself to pick it up?
2. How I memorize the topics naturally and easily?
3. How do I stay totally calm, cheerful and focused on the exam day? Making exams a fun experience and bringing out my creative best in the exam hall?

Fortunately NLP (Neuro Linguistics Programming) offers powerful, simple and rapid techniques to assist students through all of the above issues. For example; **what if you can develop a powerful remember-and-recall strategy for any topic in any subject in just 30 minutes?** NLP's accelerated learning techniques accomplish precisely this and stay with you forever.

Are you the type of person that relishes the challenge an exam brings, or does the very word 'test' send you into a frenzy of worry? Many intelligent people simply freeze in exam situations and information that was readily available to the mind before the exam is suddenly locked away. In this article, I will outline an easy to use NLP tool that, when adopted, will take the stress out of exams, making you feel relaxed and creative.

As human beings we face our first tests at a very young age. Tasks like singing a song in front of relatives, performing the new dance maneuver in front of Mummy and Daddy and simple arithmetic and spelling tests are examples of early tests. Some children thrive on showing everyone how good they are and as a consequence grow older with a positive association to tests and exams. Others feel embarrassment, perhaps are ridiculed and end up with a negative association to tests.

From the associations formed with early tests, we create generalizations that either support us in exam conditions or bring us out in a cold sweat. When we create such mental filters based on old experiences, in the present day we run the mental programs for exams and generate the same old response. The output will be exam anxiety or exam confidence (or perhaps somewhere in the middle) depending on the individual. Generally exams and anxiety don't go well together. **There are several NLP techniques that help dissolve this anxiety, but lets look at one that you can apply quite easily.**

Using this technique, you will be able to instantly achieve a state of calmness and creativity anytime, everytime. Infact, *the more often you use, the more powerful it gets!!* Ready? *[For best impact, ask someone to read this out, while you concentrate on the process]*

Step 1: Find a quiet place to sit comfortably, switch off your phone and make doubly sure you won't be disturbed for the next 20 minutes.

Step 2: Now close your eyes and think of a time when you felt completely relaxed and calm. *It can be any time from your past and any event. E.g a place of worship or in someone's arms...anything that makes you incredibly calm.*

Visualize the situation in your mind's eye. If you happen to see yourself in this movie (like seeing from the lens of a security camera on the wall) then gently slip into your body so that you are now inside the movie watching through your eyes. Take time to look around you in 3D. Now, notice and pay attention to any sounds in this movie. Next, feel inside your body for the sensations of calmness you are experiencing. Where in your body are these sensations located? Are they still or flowing in a particular direction...what is the speed of that flow? Is it fast, medium or gentle? If

you have to give a color to that sensation, what would it be? Now...apply this color to that flow and watch as it flows through your body.

Now, make that picture more colorful, sharper and watch it expand...stretch it from all corners so it becomes bigger. Make it *little brighter*. **Imagine an HD quality movie – clear, richly colored and brighter !**

Feel the flow of the feelings inside you intensified. Make the flow faster...make it 10 times faster now...zipping through your body at speed.

Step 3: As you experience this intense feeling of calmness...squeeze your palm into a fist and hold it there for 5 seconds.

Now open your palm. Open your eyes and think of something totally unrelated. For e.g what did you have in your last meal? What did you speak with the last person you spoke to yesterday? Count down from 10 to 1. Spell your name backwards.

Step 4: Now we test if the installation of calmness has happened properly. So, close your eyes and squeeze your palm into a fist (the same palm used last time) and notice the feelings of calmness spread across your body. Be sensitive to the speed and the direction it is expanding through your body...making you increasingly calm.

Release/ open your palm and squeeze once more. Again, notice how this instantly makes you calmer. Repeat this 5 times noticing each time how much more calm you get as you repeat. *Ensure that you think of something totally different after each time. This is very important.*

Step 5: Now imagine a time in your life when you demonstrated incredible creativity. New ideas that brought you appreciation and gains in life.

Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4 again. Squeeze your palms into a fist at the point when the feelings of creativity are extremely intense and also note the flow of the feelings as you experience creativity.

Step 6: If you have followed the instructions properly, you should now get combined feelings of calmness and creativity surging through your body when you squeeze the palm into a fist.

You must keep practicing this process 4 – 5 times so it becomes natural and automatic.

Step 7: Now think of an exam that is coming up in the near future. *If you don't have any exam coming up soon, make one up in your mind – preferably of a subject that stresses you the most.*

Imagine in your mind's movie that you are walking into the exam hall. See the movie from your eyes in 3D and fill in all details. E.g what are you wearing? The books/ notes in your hand, people around you? The building and hall you are walking into – color of the walls, the tables, chairs and other fixtures in the room. The lights in and outside the room? Any sounds you hear...and more.

Now notice the stress or tension in your body (the way it usually does).

At this precise moment, squeeze your palm and hold it there for 5 seconds. Notice how you are soaked in feelings calmness and creativity...see the feeling spreading across your body.

Step 8: Think of another exam coming up a little later in time. And repeat Step 7.

As you keep repeating this process, it gets unconsciously programmed in your mind for good. You can use it as often as you like and for any situation that produces stress – not just for exams.

TIPS: The secret to ensure guaranteed results from this technique can be summarized as '**I-TURN**'.

I: Intensity of the original experience of calmness/ creativity. The stronger the intensity, the better. Pick the right experiences.

T: Timing - of squeezing your palm should be precisely when the intensity of the feelings is at their peak.

U: Uniqueness of the action. Squeezing fist is typically associated with a 'winning' sentiment.

R: Repeated use of *exactly* the same action in the same manner.

N: Number of times practiced, especially in the initial period. Do this 10 – 20 times each day gradually reducing it to few times later. Imagine your stressful situation each time you practice and eventually do it in a real situation.

About the author;

Amit Pathak is a NLP Master Practitioner, professional therapist and international trainer who regularly conducts workshops on NLP and related therapy in India and abroad. Having worked with world renowned authorities in this field internationally, for over a decade, he has assisted Parents, Children of all ages, Teachers as well as people from all walks in life to transform their lives.