

“5-4-3-2-1” RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

(also known as Betty Erickson’s Induction)



SEE



HEAR



FEEL

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position, and begin to notice what you can see, hear and feel.
- Say to yourself gently:
“I can see... [name any object in your field of vision]”
and repeat for 5 different objects, for example:

“I can see a picture” “I can see a wall”
“I can see a lamp” “I can see a book”
“I can see a radiator”

[Please note that if you do this exercise in complete darkness and you can’t see anything, you can use imaginary pictures of everyday objects – just visualise them in your mind’s eye, ideally choosing neutral images that don’t have strong emotions associated with them, whether positive or negative]

- Then say to yourself:
“I can hear... [name any sound you can hear]”
and repeat for 5 different sounds, for example:

“I can hear the ticking of the clock” “I can hear traffic outside”
“I can hear my breathing” “I can hear a door creaking”
“I can hear the wind”

- Then say to yourself:
“I can feel... [name any feeling or sensation you experience]”
and repeat for 5 different sensations, for example:

“I can feel tension in my shoulders” “I can feel the pillow under my head”
“I can feel the tongue in my mouth” “I can feel my hair on my neck”
“I can feel my hand on my lap”

- Repeat the sequence, this time naming only 4 things you can SEE, 4 things you can HEAR, 4 things you can FEEL (the pictures/sounds/sensations can be the same as last time, or different – it doesn’t matter)
- Repeat, naming 3 things you can SEE, 3 things you can HEAR, 3 things you can FEEL
- Repeat, naming 2 things you can SEE, 2 things you can HEAR, 2 things you can FEEL
- Repeat, naming 1 thing you can SEE, 1 thing you can HEAR, 1 thing you can FEEL

By now, if you are not asleep yet, you should feel more relaxed and with much less “chatter” in your mind. If needed, you can repeat the procedure more than once.

Please note that this technique can be used for insomnia as well as general relaxation in stressful situations, e.g. in a waiting room before an interview, during an exam or before difficult meetings.