**Testing-Don’t Sweat It**

**Age Level:** 4th and 5th Grade Students but could be used at any grade level with adaptations to their coordination levels.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this lesson is to teach students how to relieve test anxiety through progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing and relaxing visual therapy. Children need to be taught the difference between how their bodies feel when stressed and how they feel when they are relaxed. Reducing body tension, focusing on slow breathing and visualizing relaxing places can help the children feel contentment and confident, thus increasing test scores by decreasing anxiety.

**Delivery:** Teacher directed with the students performing various movements and exercises. Students should have plenty of room to be able to move about without interfering with other students.

**Time:** 10 -15 minutes before testing

**Materials Needed:** None

**Teacher Script:**

I want you all to find a place throughout the classroom where you will have plenty of room to move without touching other students. Stand with your legs shoulder width apart and your eyes closed.

1. I want you to begin tightening and releasing your muscles: (about 15 seconds for each exercise)
2. Hands
3. Shoulders
4. Face
5. Toes
6. Legs
7. Stomach
8. Now, let’s focus on your breathing. Pretend that your lungs are balloons and every time you breathe in, you are inflating the balloon. Every time you breathe out, you are deflating the balloon. Each time you breathe in and out, try to inflate and deflate your balloon a little more. Notice how relaxed you feel. (Practice breathing for about 3 - 4 minutes)
9. Finally, I want everyone to lay on their backs, close your eyes and picture a place where you feel calm and content. You may picture a beach, sitting under a tree, swimming in the ocean or laying in your bed. While you are picturing your relaxing place, take deep breaths in and out. (3 - 4 minutes) Notice how your body feels. You may notice that you have a smile on your face. Are you happy and relaxed? Slowly open your eyes and notice how you feel. Are you refreshed and calm?

You’ve done a great job of tensing and relaxing your muscles, focusing on your breathing and picturing a calm place. If you begin to feel anxious or nervous during your test, focus on your breathing and relaxation.