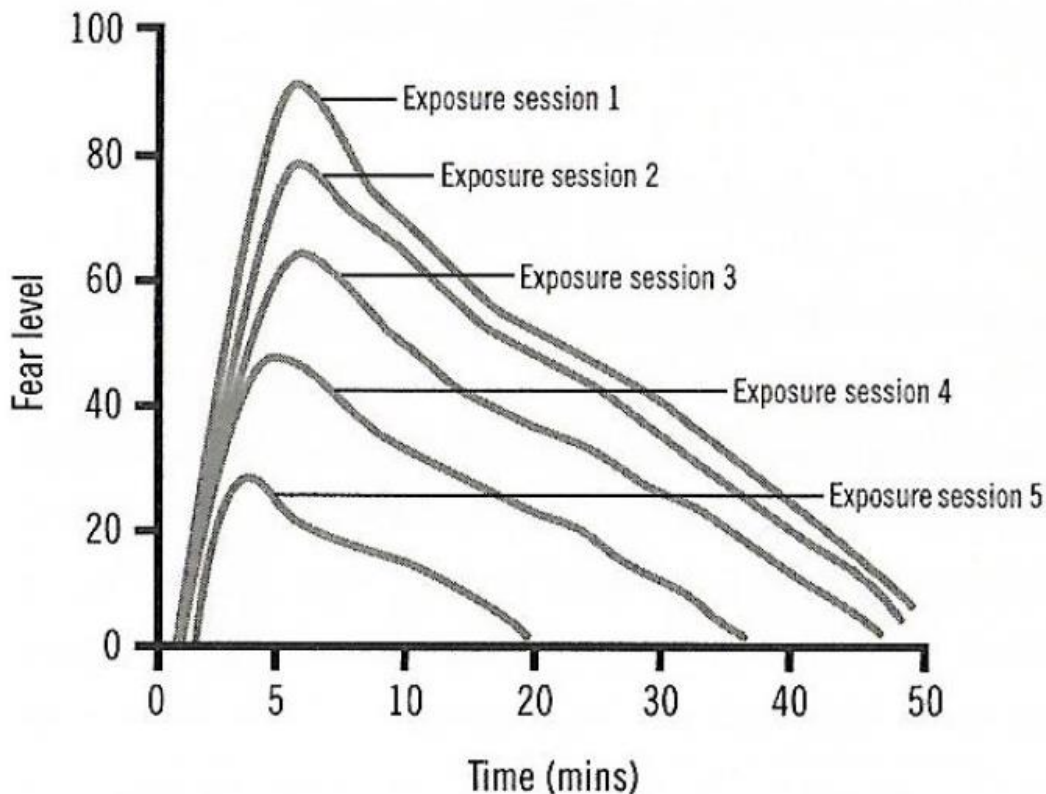


## The Rules for Exposure



### Rule 1: Create a fear hierarchy

Rank the things you have been avoiding in terms of how much fear they cause you and start with the lowest behaviours (although if it is below 40% fear it might be too low). Where 0% is *no* fear and 100% is the highest fear you can imagine.

### Rule 2: Without Safety Behaviours

That means, to do each exposure exercise without engaging in any unnecessary *safety behaviours*. The ideal is therefore that you do each Exposure exercise *without* any form of safety behaviour. However, if this would cause too much fear to begin with, it's ok to start an Exposure exercise with a safety behaviour, but try to drop it later.

### Rule 3: Prolonged

Continue each exposure until your fear has dropped by 50% from that recorded at the start of the exercise. Everyone is different and no one knows how long it will take for your physical symptoms to reduce by 50%, so it is helpful to put aside 90 minutes for your first exposure exercise. On average you could expect your first exposure to take perhaps 45 minutes and progressive exposures to reduce down from that. At other times it may be appropriate to build up your tolerance to a feared behaviour or object. Everyone is unique

#### Rule 4: Repeated

Repeatedly expose yourself to the situation or object you are working on for as many times as it takes until you fear rating stops rising quickly when preparing to do the exercise and doesn't go beyond what you consider to be a manageable level at the start of the exercise. This will vary from person to person, but many people report that having 30% fear of an object or situation can be managed.

Try to repeat the exercise as many times as you need to each week, until you find the fear manageable (30% or less). Many people reported that doing the Exposure exercise 4-5 times a week was really beneficial. But this will vary from person to person given other competing demands in their lives that may get in the way. Therefore try to complete Exposure exercises about 4-5 times a week, when you can, and if you achieve it, that's great. If not, just do your best!

