

Stop Nail Biting!

Permanently

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Gilbreth Brown

Stop Nail Biting!

Reader's Rave:

“This is confirmation that I have received the package. I have spent the weekend reading the material, and I can say that when I finished reading the solution chapter I was actually laughing... Laughing because for 25 years I have felt powerless to stop this habit - and yet in one page you describe a technique that I know will work. I just had to laugh! So now, after three days I have still only applied the method a few times - the strength seems to come from *knowing* a way out!”

“We received your book this past week and I started the technique right away. I'm on day six of no nail biting and it's been so much easier than I ever would have thought. Truly can't believe it's been six days already! I can't wait to show the family at Christmas that after probably close to 30 years of nail biting, I have finally kicked the habit!”

“Hi Gil thanks very much for enquiring. I have read the book and not bitten my nails since. I am scared I will go back to the habit as I have been doing it for so long. It has been about five weeks since I started and my nails are not fully grown yet but they are a vast improvement. I hear they take about 6 months to look good after biting them for so long. My husband is amazed, I have been trying to stop for years (I am 31 and a mother to 6 great kids) and each time he has encouraged me and tried to help me. Each time I have gone back to the habit about four to six weeks later and I felt I had not only let myself down but let him down too. The only time I haven't bitten my nails for a long time is when I have just had a baby (maybe there is something behind that!).

When I see people in shops and bars and restaurants who bite their nails and are complete strangers (none of my friends have this terrible habit) I feel like giving them your website to help them. But I think it might be a bit rude! As you say in your book it is a real burden and one feels quite embarrassed about doing such a childish thing when one is a grown up.

Thank you so, so much for sharing your technique and I will promote your website when I can.”

Inside Title & Author Page

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Publishing and Copyright Page

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A special thank you goes to Barbara Ardinger, whose no nonsense editing was welcomed and sorely needed.

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Author's Information Page

Gilbreth Brown has been living in Asia for approximately the last ten years. He is originally from Providence, Rhode Island. Born on February 8, 1966 he grew up in Providence before relocating with his family to western RI. Currently, he is residing in Bangkok Thailand. Although he is a frequent guest speaker and contributor to leading business publications, this is his first book.

Gil is an avid reader, and most often you will find him browsing the self-help section of the neighbourhood bookstore. His personal quest to better himself led him on a long search for the cure to his nail biting problem. The results of that search are contained here.

He holds a Bachelors of Science from Boston University, a Masters in Japanese Business Studies from Chaminade University of Honolulu, and an MBA from Columbia Business School. As a result of a long stay in Asia, he is highly proficient in Japanese and Thai language.

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Dedication Page

For Gator and Q, two stray dogs that have recently come into and brightened my life in so many ways. I could only wish to have a portion of their courage and beauty.

Now if they would only leave the kitchen cabinets alone...

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8 The Pitfalls of Other Methods

A simple search on the Internet will reveal that there are a large number of different *cures* being offered in the marketplace. To say that some are dubious would be an understatement. The following material comes from two sources, my own experience, and the experience of hundreds of others that I have spoken to and interacted with.

I have never seen a cure that is as effective, efficient, and simple as the one described here. Nor have I seen any methods or cures that are as well documented with real cases, success stories, and testimonials. Let the facts and data speak for themselves. Let other, less credible, solutions fall by the wayside.

The mail I receive on a daily basis is my evidence that nowhere is there a solution that is as perfect as the technique I give in this book. In my mailbox are notes and letters from people who provide verified evidence of their success with this treatment. The support and encouragement I have received from people who have tried the technique prompted me to write this book and share the secret with as many people as possible.

People write to me to express gratitude and to say how lucky they consider themselves for stumbling onto this cure. Many also go into details regarding other methods they tried in the past without success. The following are some of the methods people have told me about. Such methods often fail to deliver on their stated claims. I address each touted remedy according to its prevalence in the marketplace.

Bad-tasting Lotions

I would say that almost 50% of the people who come to me with a nail-biting problem have tried this method. When I consider the number of people in the world who bite their nails, I have to admire the economics involved in this so-called cure. There is some big money here. Unfortunately, too many people fall into this trap simply because they are desperate enough to try anything. I was one of them.

Potential users of this product should know that bad-tasting lotions suffer from four key flaws. One lotion I tried, however, was very effective for keeping my two new stray dogs from chewing on the kitchen cabinets. I am thankful to this company for saving me loads on new cabinets. For habit

control though, many nail biters have expressed to me disappointment with this approach.

First, bad tasting lotions do not work well for habitual nail biters who *pick*. This was me. I did not really bite, but I would pick and prune the skin around the nail instead. Obviously then, a bad tasting lotion would not have affected my habit. In my experience, most nail biters also pick. For this reason lotions and creams are only very rarely effective.

Second, bad tasting lotions do not attack the habit at its root. As I revealed in chapter two, nail biting is a two-step process. Bad tasting lotions do nothing to prevent the habitual nail biter from secondary targeting. By default, it is thus not addressing the entire end to end habit.

Third, and perhaps most ironically, bad tasting lotions lose their effectiveness over time. I cannot begin to count the number of people who have remarked to me that they find the lotions curiously tasty, or at least palatable. I have no explanation for this phenomenon, but it is well known that a person's acuity of taste declines with age. The fact that most habitual nail biters are well into their middle age only seems to support my assertion that bad tasting lotions lose their bite over time. (No pun intended.)

At a minimum, many who have used a bad-tasting lotion for a prolonged period remark that they simply grow accustomed to the taste. This is an obvious reduction in efficacy. One woman remarked to me that she had been purchasing this product for several years without any real success. She had no other options and was using the product to make herself feel that she was at least *trying*. This is a very common comment.

Finally, bad tasting lotions and creams wash off. This is probably their biggest flaw, especially for people who are active in sports or who are continually in and out of the water. I was a lifeguard on the coast of Rhode Island for several years, and I can tell you that a bad tasting cream would not have lasted long on my fingers. Long hours spent in boring solitude on the lifeguard chair frequently led to my nail biting.

To all those contemplating purchasing a bad-tasting lotion, I urge you to do a careful and thorough examination of this cure's effectiveness. You may find yourself buying this product forever with no real progress. If so, send me that product's company name so that I can buy the stock and grow rich.

Hypnosis

This is probably the second most widely touted remedy for nail biting. While I myself am highly sceptical of hypnosis, there is some evidence that it might be effective for certain disorders or habit management. There seems to be a large pool of people who support hypnotic therapies, and as a non-expert I hesitate to debunk the treatment or alienate millions of supporters of this alternative therapy.

What I will do, though, is share the experiences and comments from other people who have tried this method without success. I once tried a hypnotic tape myself. I fell asleep. As a treatment for insomnia, I have only the highest product endorsement. For nail biting, I suggest that you review your own level of open mindedness.

Regarding hypnosis, one of the first things that I have heard is that many people find their scepticism gets in the way of the treatment. Proponents often remark that if the patient were only more open-minded, the treatment would work. To me, this seems like a roundabout argument. Clear, scientific evidence that hypnosis works would naturally make people more open-minded and the treatment would then gain significant mainstream momentum. Something called an *alternative therapy* does not inspire confidence in my mind.

If you are the type of person who is drawn to serious and well documented clinical data, you may find this treatment method lacks appeal. I have never spoken with one person who has indicated to me that they quit biting their nails after hypnotic therapy.

The second major flaw to the use of hypnosis as a therapy is that it transfers responsibility for the cure to the therapist. The patient's eventual success at overcoming the habit now rests more heavily with the quality or the talents of the hypnotist (or the quality of the product if you have purchased a hypnotic tape).

Nail biting is an extremely personal habit, born from extremely personal reasons. By its nature, the responsibility for quitting the habit must rest with the habit owner. If the hypnotist or hypnotic material is not of sufficient quality or efficacy, the behavior modification results are less assured. Is it not dangerous to rely on the quality of someone else's work for your own cure and well-being?

With regard to the treatment I present in this book, the responsibility for the cure lands squarely on the owner of the habit. This is where I believe it

should fall. The car is provided, but the road to success must be travelled by each individual.

Finally, hypnotic tools seem to be perpetual. I have met several folks who tell me that they have been using hypnotic tapes for years. To me, a cure is just that—a cure. It should be final, permanent, and lifelong. Until the benefits of hypnosis are better documented and more widely supported by the scientific and medical community, I retain my scepticism.

Behavior change management

Following creams, lotions, and hypnosis, the next *cure* I have seen touted in the market is what I refer to as *behavior change management*. Here are some examples, and a brief discussion of each supposed therapy.

Incompatible behavior

This technique is very effective for animal training. The trick is to teach the animal to perform a behavior that is incompatible with a second, less desirable behavior. A good example is a dog that jumps on people when guests or visitors arrive. Animal trainers address this problem by teaching the dog to sit (usually with food treats) or to keep four paws on the floor when a guest arrives. This is incompatible with jumping up and helps this annoying dog ownership problem.

For nail biting, the advice is to train or teach yourself incompatible behavior (for example, keep or slap your hands at your sides). There are various versions of this approach (squeezing stress balls, inserting hands into pants pockets). My response to this treatment method is this: if it were this simple, why not just train yourself to stop biting your nails? Many people find that they do not receive the same level of habit gratification from this approach, and as a result often regress quickly back into habitual nail biting. The reason for this is clear. This approach does not teach the mind that nail biting is no longer a satisfying pursuit.

Keep yourself occupied (often used with children)

This is advice to keep yourself or your child engaged in some other type of behavior (e.g., go running) any time the habit rears up. Unfortunately, this advice has several flaws. People, for example, find themselves in down times where they simply relax and contemplate life. It is impossible to stay active 100% of the time. You do not want to go running when you are exhausted and simply want to relax and watch a little TV. In addition, some

nail biters engage the habit even when they are very busy or heavily engaged in some activity. You are not going to go running when you have a business deadline to meet. I have found that trying to keeping oneself occupied or distracted, has absolutely no affect on nail biting. The habit persists.

Relaxation techniques or visualization

This form of therapy requires that the patient go off to a quiet place and perform some type of meditation or visualization. The subject meditates and visualizes beautiful, full, well-groomed nails. This technique is designed to negate the nail biting urge and focus the mind on eradicating the habit.

While it is impractical in many ways, this cure has another more serious flaw - the technique is time consuming. Meditation usually takes at least 20 minutes to reach a period of adequate relaxation. Further, I understand that the ability and skill to meditate correctly can take upwards of several years to master.

Brute force

Finally, this method of treatment is one that almost all biters have tried at one time or another. It involves covering up the nails so as to prevent access. In my case, I wrapped a nail or finger in a plastic band-aid for a week or two and hoped that the nail and skin would recover. I pictured myself wrapping each finger one after the next until all ten were recovered and my habit vanquished. It did not work. I actually found myself picking the outside of the band-aid looking for little ways to work under the plastic. Not only was the band-aid unsightly, but I would resume the habit immediately after removing it.

Other people try gloves, but the outcome is the same. The habit has not been treated, only postponed. Such techniques are simply temporary solutions to the problem, not to mention presenting serious intimacy issues for couples. One desperate woman I know had taken to wearing gloves in bed at night. Her husband, although sympathetic, was less than thrilled with this approach.

Nail wraps and polishes

It is not uncommon for female nail biters to apply polish or acrylic nails in a brute force attempt to stop nail biting. I do not recommend this approach. First, this does nothing to treat the underlying habit. Second, polishes and

top coats sometimes chip and peel slightly. I have heard that these chips and peelings are similar to bits of skin—they provide additional unnecessary temptation to prune! I do, however, recommend healing or moisturizing lotions. I also suggest frequent trips to the manicurist if your personal economics allows such pampering.

In summary, there is an abundance of advice to nail-biters and varied approaches to treating the problem. Most of it is erroneous and simple old wives' tales. The fact that people continue to come to me seeking help after trying all sorts of different cures (and spending who knows how much money) indicates that these methods leave a lot to be desired. If you are considering or have already tried any form of treatment, please feel free to log onto our site and share your experience with others.

To date, I have not come across any cure that is as effective, efficient, and permanent as the system that I present in this book. It is highly cost effective, simple to perform, fast-acting, and ever-present, and has no side effects. It is as close to a perfect cure as I can imagine. A patent for this technique is, unfortunately not available. I checked.

