

FOCUSED RELAXATION HELPS CREATE HARMONY IN MIND AND BODY

How can it help?



Guided imagery uses the connection of your senses in your mind and body to create a relaxed state. It can actually stimulate changes in heart rate, blood pressure and respiratory patterns, because of the deep, physical mind-body connection.

How can Guided Imagery Help Me?



It can bring about the state of mind and body most conducive to healing. Relaxation techniques can actually create changes in heart rate, blood pressure and respiratory patterns and has been shown to reduce stress, relieve pain and even lessen the occurrences of insomnia.

Simple Relaxation at any Time



You can use this as a regular relaxation exercise or in times of stress when you need to relax.

Guided imagery is pleasant to practice, not overly difficult to learn, and is as easy as indulging in a vivid daydream!



GUIDED IMAGERY

Guided imagery is a convenient and simple relaxation technique that can help you quickly and easily manage stress and reduce tension in your body. Guided imagery involves using your imagination to help put your body in a more relaxed state. Just as your body can become tense and stressed in response to thoughts that make us angry or anxious, it can also become more calm and relaxed in response to calming, peaceful, and pleasant thoughts. For example, have you ever noticed your salivary glands becoming active when you crave certain food?

Try it Today

Imagery can be "guided" by an instructor, using audio recordings, or by using your inner voice and imagination.

1 Relax and imagine being in a place that is peaceful and relaxing to you. Envision with great detail the relaxing scene.

- A quiet beach.
- Sitting by a fire in a secluded snow cabin, deep in the woods, sipping hot cocoa and reading the latest bestseller while wrapped in a plush blanket and fuzzy slippers.
- Any place else that is peaceful and soothing to you.

2 Use all of your senses in your imagination.

See the waves gently lapping on the shore or the light filtering through the leaves of the trees.
Hear the birds singing or the leaves rustling.
Smell the flowers, the grass, or the salt air.
Feel the sun or gentle breeze on your skin.

3 Feel that you are actually there. Enjoy being there for a few minutes.

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE



Guided imagery uses the power of the mind to evoke positive emotions. It works, quite simply, by imagining a relaxing scene in great detail. It utilizes all of your senses — vision, taste, sound, smell, and touch — to build images in the mind that your body feels are as real as external events.

Private Garden

- **Close your eyes.** Allow yourself to get comfortable.
- Picture yourself walking slowly along a path.
- Soon you come to a gate. You know this gate leads to a special place where you feel welcomed, safe, and comfortable.
- Push the gate open and **allow yourself** to enter your very own private garden.
- Look around and notice what is in your garden. **See** all the colors and objects that are in this place. Notice how beautiful they are. Look at the various shapes and see how varied they are. Look at the ground, the sky, and see where they meet. Your garden is calm and tranquil.
- Begin to **explore** this place with your sense of **touch**. Perhaps some things are soft and warm, and others are smooth and cool. Notice what the air feels like; is it cool or warm? Is there a breeze or is it still? Take the time to feel the peace and serenity in this private place.
- Become aware of the **sounds** that you hear in your garden. The sounds in your garden are pleasing to the ear and very comforting. Perhaps it is quiet in your garden, or maybe there are a number of sounds. Some of the sounds may be very soft, while others may be louder. Relax and listen for a while and see if you can identify the different sounds in your garden.
- Become aware of what **smells** you might smell. Take a deep breath in, and notice the fragrances that are present. Some of them may be familiar, while others may be unfamiliar. The fragrances are pleasant and soothing.
- **Take your time** and enjoy your visit to the garden. Spend the time that is necessary for you to rejuvenate and to care for yourself.
- When you are ready to leave, slowly walk back towards the gate of your garden.
- Push the gate open and return to the path that led you to the garden.
- Remember that you can use your imagination to return to your private garden at any time you wish.
- Stretch gently and open your eyes, feeling refreshed and alert.



STRESS
WELL

Did You Know?

Research shows that thinking about an action - even while your body is at rest - will fire the neural pathways in your brain just as if you were actually doing it!

Looking for additional guided exercises?

Headspace app & Mindful.org

Source: www.mirecc.va.gov, www.clevelandclinic.org, www.verywellmind.com, www.headspace.com

Contact your health & wellness center for more information and to discuss your individual stress well habits today!