

Guided Imagery



Guided Imagery is the use of relaxation, visualization, and imagination to improve well-being, health, and mood. It can be done alone or with a therapist, CD, or video.

Dr. Martin Rossman (an expert in healing stress and anxiety) says, in his article about Guided Imagery, "you can worry yourself sick or think yourself well". Below are instructions on how to do Guided Imagery.

1. Find a quiet place to sit or lie down and become relaxed. Be sure you are comfortable. You can use the Deep Breathing or Tense & Relax Methods to become more relaxed. You can use the instructions on the back of this page to learn how to breathe more deeply.

2. Clear all thoughts out of your mind and begin to imagine something.

You can imagine any one of the following, or come up with your own image:

- Imagine your favorite place (real or imaginary) or a place you would like to go to, like a peaceful lake, a sunny beach, or a beautiful mountain area.
- Imagine that your pain or discomfort is an electric current and you can turn it off by turning off the switch.
- Imagine any pain you have can dissolve into a cloud and it can float away.
- Imagine having a conversation with your pain or disease; pretend your pain or disease can talk and imagine what it would say and what you could say back.
- Imagine you can feel clean water flowing through you cleansing out all the pain and discomfort.
- Imagine you are a flower or the sun and you can feel your petals or rays flowing in the air.
- Imagine you find a key and then a door that enters a room where you can leave all your pain and discomfort.

Whatever you choose to imagine, try to imagine it with all your senses. How warm or cold is it? What do you smell? If you could imagine touching something, how would it feel? What sounds do you hear in your image? What colors do you see?

Don't worry, there is no right or wrong way to do this. Just relax and use your imagination for at least 10 to 20 minutes.

Tense & Relax Method

(Progressive Muscle Relaxation)

***Tense & Relax* is a method used to reduce stress and muscle tension and help reduce chronic pain. With regular practice, Tense & Relax helps you become familiar with what tension feels like and how to let it go.**

You can combine Deep Breathing and Tense & Relax for deeper relaxation. First do Deep Breathing for 10 minutes and then do the Tense & Relax Method. You can use the instructions on the back of this page to learn how to breathe more deeply.

1. **Find a quiet place to sit or lie down.** Be sure you are as comfortable as possible.
2. **Slowly and gently tense the muscles in your right foot. Hold the tension for a few seconds and then as you breathe out relax the right foot completely.** You can say or think the word RELAX as you relax the foot. Let go of any tension. Pause before you go to the next body part.
Do the same with the left foot.
3. Next, **tense the muscles in your right lower leg (calf) muscles.** Hold the lower leg tightly or tensely for a few seconds then as you breathe out relax the muscles completely. Pause.
Do the same with the left lower leg.
4. **Do the same tensing and relaxing of all the following muscle groups.** Be sure to let go of the tensing as you exhale and let the muscles relax as much as possible. Say or think the word RELAX as you let go of the tension. Be sure to pause between each body part:
 - Your right thigh (upper leg) then left thigh
 - Your inner legs by squeezing your legs together
 - Your buttock muscles by squeezing your bottom
 - Your abdomen (belly) muscles by contracting and sucking in your belly
 - Your right shoulder by pulling your shoulder up towards your ear
 - Your left shoulder by pulling your shoulder up towards your ear
 - Your jaw by clenching your teeth together gently
 - Your lips by squeezing your lips together
 - Your eyes by squeezing your eyes tightly
 - Your forehead by squeezing your eyebrows together.
5. Take some time to feel your breath again when you finish tensing and relaxing.