CLINICA
family health

Guided Imagery Meditation

Guided imagery focuses your imagination on relaxing and healing images. A detailed example is given below, but you can make up your own healing and peaceful scenarios. The important thing is to include as much sensory detail as possible. Try to include all five senses: touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. Try the following guided imagery meditation.

Get in a very comfortable sitting or lying position. Make sure that you are warm enough but not too warm, and that you will not be interrupted by the phone, doorbell, or the needs of others. You might want to make a tape recording of these instructions.

Stare at a spot above your head on the ceiling (if you're lying down) or stare straight ahead. Take a deep breath to a count of eight, hold it for a count of four, let it out for a count of eight.

Again – in to a count of eight; hold for a count of four; exhale for a count of eight.

Again – in to a count of eight; hold for a count of four; exhale for a count of eight.

Now close your eyes, but keep them in the same position they were in when you were staring at a spot on the ceiling or in front of you.

Breathe in to a count of eight; hold for a count of four; exhale for a count of eight.

Now focus on your toes. Let them completely relax. Now move the feeling of relaxation slowly up your legs, through your heels and calves to your knees. Now let the warm feeling of relaxation move up your thighs. Feel your whole body relaxing. Let the relaxation move very slowly through your buttocks, lower abdomen, and lower back. Now feel it moving, very slowly, up your spine and through your abdomen. Now feel the warm relaxation flowing into your chest and upper back.

Let this relaxation flow from your shoulders, down your arms, through your elbows and wrists, out through your hands and fingers. Now let the relaxation go slowly through your throat and up your neck, letting it all soften and relax. Let the feeling move up into your face. Feel the relaxation fill your jaw and cheek muscles, and surround your eyes. Relax your eyes. Let the feeling of relaxation move up into your forehead. Now let you whole scalp relax and feel warm and comfortable. Your body is now completely relaxed, with the feeling of relaxation filling every muscle and cell of your body.

Picture yourself walking on the beach on a sunny day. As you stroll along, you feel the warmth of the sun on your back. You lie down on a soft towel in the sand. The sand molds to your body and you feel warm and comfortable. The sun warms your skin, the salt air smells fresh. You can still taste the fresh-squeezed juice you just drank, the juice that a friend made for you because she knows how much you like it. You hear the waves breaking against the shore in a steady rhythm. The sound of seagulls calling overhead completes your feeling of blissful contentment.

As you lie here you realize that you are perfectly and completely relaxed. You feel safe and at peace with the world. You know you have the power to relax yourself completely at any time you need to. By completely relaxing, you are giving the body opportunity to stabilize itself, and that when you wake up you will feel calm, relaxed, and able to get on with your tasks for the day.

Now slowly wiggle your fingers and toes. Gradually open your eyes and resume your activities.

Focusing on Detail

For a quick relaxer when your day gets hectic, focus on detail. If you are at home, keep several picture postcards or greeting cards with lots of attractive detail handy. I recommend the book *Animalia* by Graeme Base. It is filled with detailed pictures which are very interesting to study. When you start to feel rushed or agitated, sit down in a quiet, comfortable spot, and focus on the detail in your chosen picture for ten minutes. Notice if you feel calmer afterwards.

You can do this exercise anywhere by just focusing on your surroundings. It can keep you from getting irritated when you're waiting in line or stuck in traffic. If you are waiting in a doctor's office, focus on the detail in a picture in a magazine.

Checking In

Every so often throughout the day, take a brief break, take several deep breaths, and get back in touch with how you feel. Check yourself out all over, and then imagine the tightness flowing out of the tense places in your body. Let your mind take a brief but complete break.