

Guided Imagery

Your mind and body react the same to imagined pictures and real pictures, also called images. Guided imagery uses all of your senses to help you imagine enjoyable moments. These may be real memories or images you've seen in books or movies which you'd like to experience.

All you need to use this relaxation tool is your imagination. As you practice guided imagery, your body relaxes. Over time, being relaxed will help you heal, reducing pain and anxiety.

Many people find it helpful to practice relaxed breathing before they use guided imagery.

PRACTICING GUIDED IMAGERY

Begin by relaxing your breathing. Then revisit a favorite memory or imagine a relaxing place — somewhere you'd like to be. Use your five senses to picture every detail about this place. Make the images as "alive" or vivid as possible.

As you imagine yourself in that scene, ask yourself these questions:

- What do you see here?
- What do you hear?
- What do you smell?
- If you'd eat something here, what would you taste?
- What do you feel under your feet and in your hands?

After each question, pause to picture the answer using your senses. Remember: Be as detailed and vivid as possible. Check in with your body as you do this. How does it feel? If you notice tension, return to your relaxed breathing. Adjust your image as needed to help your body relax better. Don't worry about "getting it right." Just have fun imagining.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

If you're having difficulties getting started A guided imagery app, DVD/ video or CD/tape may help.

If possible, find a private, quiet space to do guided imagery. You can do this sitting in a comfortable chair or lying down.

This relaxation method works best when you are not worried about "getting it right." Just have fun imagining.

If you feel "stuck" on a sense, it's okay move onto the next sense.

If you choose to revisit a favorite memory or image of a person or place that evokes positive emotions, it's okay to add details even if they weren't part of your original experience.

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Apps:** Guided Imagery, Simply Being , Wellscapes
- **Book:**
 - Guided imagery CDs/tapes may be sold in medical stores or bookstores, or you may be able to rent them from your library.
 - Health Journeys Audio (purchase required): healthjourneys.com/successful-surgery
 - healthjourneys.com/a-meditation-to-help-ease-pain



- **Relaxation Techniques:**
[Try These Steps to Reduce Stress](http://mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/relaxation-technique/art-20045368)
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- **Guided Imagery Video (Relaxation Evening Sky):**
mayoclinic.org/pe?mc=MC7194-03
- **Guided Imagery Video (Relaxation Seaside Serenity):**
mayoclinic.org/pe?mc=MC7194-06