

PRACTICE #3: **SPECIAL PLACE GUIDED IMAGERY**

Benefits

Reduced side effects related to cancer treatment:
 anxiety, nausea, fatigue, depression
Increased comfort
Improved self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of control
Increased calm, steadiness
Greater self-awareness

Guided Imagery

Imagery focuses and directs the imagination to
 help influence the body's healing
Imagery uses all of the senses
 Vision, sound, touch, smell, taste

Warm Up

Close your eyes
Imagine yourself in your kitchen
Notice what you see, smell, touch, taste, and hear.

Preparation

Find a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down, with your head, neck and spine aligned. Uncross your legs and let your hands rest quietly in your lap or by your sides. Loosen any tight clothing and gently close your eyes.

In this guided imagery, you use your imagination to create images, colors, textures, smells and sounds to take you to an inner place of relaxation, healing and peace.

Script: Special Place Guided Imagery

Excerpted and adapted from Belleruth Naparstek, Staying Well with Guided Imagery

“Begin by taking a few easy breaths.... breathing in and breathing all the way out.... Breathing in....and this time, see if you can send the warm energy of the breath to any part of your body that is tense or sore or tight.... and releasing the tension with the exhale.... and breathing it out.... And any unwelcome thoughts that come to mind, those too can be sent out with the breath... released with the exhale... so that for just a moment, the mind is empty... And any emotions that are rocking around in there... those too can be noted, and acknowledged, and sent out with the breath.... so your emotional self can be still and quiet... like a lake with no ripples.

And now, imagine a place where you feel calm and peaceful and easy.... a place either make believe or real.... a place from your past.... or somewhere you’ve always wanted to go.... it doesn’t matter.... just so it’s a place that feels good and safe and peaceful to you...

And allow the place to become real to you.... look around you.... take the place in with your eyes.... enjoy the colors.... the scenery.... look over to your right.... and over to your left... And listen to the sounds of the place.... whatever they might be.... becoming familiar with all the different sounds that your special, safe place offers up to you.... And feel whatever you’re sitting against or lying upon.... the texture of the ground beneath you... And feel the air on your skin.... notice the temperature of your place... And smell its rich fragrance.... notice the smells in your special place.... Notice what time of day it is... enjoy the light and the peaceful time of day...

So take it all in, all the richness of it... with all of your senses.... become more and more attuned to your safe and beautiful special place.... feeling thankful and happy to be there.... And let your body soak in the vibrance of the place.... let the beauty of this place of healing nourish you.... take it in with every full, deep breath.... all the way down into your belly.... all the way down to the tips of your toes.... feel the penetrating warmth and power of the place.... soaking into your skin.... down through the muscle and bone.... all the way to each and every cell.... reaching down to the peaceful stillness at your very center....

Longer pause....

And so... know that you can come back to this place... whenever you wish... to help your body, mind and spirit, relax, rejuvenate and heal... simply by finding a quiet time and place, getting into a comfortable position either sitting in a chair or lying down... and imagining yourself in your special place.

Keeping your eyes closed for just a little while longer... taking a moment to notice how you are feeling... your body... your mind... your spirit... once again, feeling yourself sitting in your chair... (or lying down) breathing in and out, rhythmically and easily... slowly coming back into the room... opening your eyes whenever you are ready.”

How and When to Use Safe Place Guided Imagery

Regular Daily Practice

- Set aside 5-10 minutes at a regular time in the morning or evening, or both to practice
- Practicing every day at regular times, will give you faster, easier access to your “safe place” at other times in the day.

Throughout the day

- Go to your “safe place” to calm you throughout the day: on the subway, waiting for an appointment, in the dentist chair, etc
- Find your own times and places to go to your “special place”

In stressful situations and/or emergencies

- When you find yourself starting to feel tense or anxious or in pain, close your eyes, and imagine yourself in your special place.