

## Text for “An Introduction to Guided Imagery”

Welcome to an introduction to guided imagery. In the next few minutes, you will hear an explanation of guided imagery. You’ll be led through a relaxation exercise, and then guided through an imagery experience to help you feel better.

Guided imagery can be a way for you to find freedom from tension and stress. It can provide calm amidst worries, and relief from physical discomfort.

Guided imagery is safe, effective, and has been used by people for hundreds of years. Research shows that guided imagery can help ease pain and nausea, lower blood pressure and heart rate, improve sleep and even boost the immune system.

Guided imagery is not a substitute for any medical treatment. It is intended to be used along with your medical treatment to help you get the most of your treatment.

Guided imagery is a simple process that uses your imagination to communicate with your body in a way that helps your body’s natural healing process. To your body, images and experiences created in your mind can be as real as actual events. Your body will react as though the experience is happening. If your mind is picturing a relaxing experience in a relaxing place, your body will react by releasing the healthy hormones and biochemicals that help your body rest, restore itself and heal.

The guided imagery will begin with relaxation, followed by suggestions of images to create with your imagination. You may find that your attention wanders from the suggestions or seems distracted by thoughts. If this happens, simply set these thoughts aside and return your focus to what is being said.

The suggested images you hear are intended to be general enough for you to create your own details and sensations. You may even find your imagination to be a step or two ahead of my suggested images. That is fine.

You may find that as you relax, your muscles move or jerk. This is normal for someone who has been experiencing stress or pain.

Sometimes, effective imagery generates an emotional response. If feelings arise, it’s a sign that the imagery is working for you. Try to let the feelings pass through, as though your body is cleansing itself.

You may be aware of feeling better after your very first experience of guided imagery. While it doesn’t take long to learn, the more practice, the more effective the benefits. Many people find it helpful to practice guided imagery twice a day, morning and evening.

Disclaimer: This document contains instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine and the Rogel Cancer Center for cancer patients and/or cancer caregivers. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about Guided Imagery, your condition or your treatment plan.

I invite you now to try to allow yourself to take a break from stress and worry as you experience the dynamic duo of your mind and body.

Disclaimer: This document contains instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine and the Rogel Cancer Center for cancer patients and/or cancer caregivers. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about Guided Imagery, your condition or your treatment plan.