

Pain Relief Imagery

Hello, I'm Claire Casselman of the Complementary Therapies Program of the University of Michigan's Comprehensive Cancer Center. Welcome to this podcast of guided imagery designed to assist you with managing the often stressful aspects of cancer diagnosis, treatment or life after treatment.

Whether you are a person with cancer, have been treated for cancer, or a friend or loved one of someone with cancer – you are aware that this time requires constant attention to the details of appointments, schedules, healthy eating, and maintaining family and work routines. More and more, research has shown the benefits of practices such as guided imagery to support a person's ability to cope, manage and heal. The good news is that you may choose when and where to use this very simple, very powerful, non-invasive strategy.

For more information about the benefits of guided imagery, how it works and tips for optimal use, please see the webpage.....

This particular imagery is designed to assist with experiences of pain....to reduce or even dissipate your pain. For some of us, just the sound of the word pain and our associations with it can generate a physical reaction of resistance. Throughout this experience, see if you can allow yourself to stay open to the suggestions of releasing to receive comfort. Each time you allow yourself to listen and practice this imagery your response will become more effective and powerful. Be sure to practice it initially at times when you are not in acute pain so that you may become familiar with it.

With all guided imagery, the first step is to release physical and mental tension and be comfortable. For now, find a comfortable position. This may be seated in a chair or lying on a bed or on the floor. See if you can align your head, neck and shoulders in a fashion that feels supported and comfortable....

Begin to become aware of your breathing. You don't have to change anything or work at it, just notice it....the steady rise and fall of your breath....breathing in nourishing, cleansing breath, and releasing any tension or spent energy as you exhale....in with the life-giving force of breath, out with that which is no longer serving you.....in with peace, calm – out with worry or discomfort...

If thoughts should arise and compete for your attention, there's no need to engage or analyze. Likewise with emotions – if feelings or emotions compete for your attention, there's no need to engage. Simply let them be as bubbles in the glass that float to the surface and are released. If you lose your way, just return your awareness to your breath.

See if you can inch your breath lower and lower into your body. With each breath, bringing in vitality and releasing tension....the steady rise and fall of your breath.....

Notice your muscles softening, your joints softening....perhaps you're aware of creating easy, open space within your chest and torso....Feel the drain of tension from your head through your neck, gently passing across your shoulders and down your arms and hands...tension melting and passing through your finger tips. Feel the gentle drain of tension flowing from your throat down through your chest, your ribs both front and back, your belly, flowing past your backside, your hips, your thighs, knees, calves, your ankles, emptying into your feet and exiting your toes....a gentle flow of release, leaving soft openness throughout your body.

Perhaps there's a place in your body that still holds pain or discomfort. This may be a part of your body that has been the focus of great concern or attention. If you are able, you may want to place your hand over this place of pain or discomfort. Feel the gentle, light warmth of your hand. Use your mind's eye to direct your next few breaths to this spot.....inhaling and directing the easy vitality of your breath.....breath surrounding and comforting.....and carrying away the discomfort as it is released.....

And now, become aware of a pail or bucket within your reach....see it there near you....you know that the pail contains a special gel that has analgesic powers.....it has the ability to numb and release pain.... you're aware the gel has a very pleasing and calming fragrance.....it's a perfect temperature.....alongside the bucket is a brush.....go ahead and dip either the brush or your hand into the bucket....coat your hand or brush with the analgesic and apply it to the painful place in your body.....feel the gel on your skin, absorbed through your skin and to the area of pain...even if your place of discomfort is deep within your body, patiently watch for and sense the arrival of the comforting, numbing, easing sensations of the gel....it reaches the pain and gently soothes, loosens, untangles and releases the pain.....you may dip your hand or brush into the pail and re-apply the analgesic gel multiple times.....with each application, feel the gentle power of the gel sink deeply to the point of your distress....surround, soothe, loosen, untangle and release.....take your time.....

As the comfort of the gel continues to bring relief, notice the pain itself.....perhaps it is beginning to slightly stir.....a sign that it is giving way....it is loosening its grip....Watch as the painful sensation is set free.....it is beginning to break up.....notice that you can assist with this...continue to focus on the tissue around the pain...gently encourage the tissue to let go, to continue to soften....to release any resistance....allow yourself to release any mental resistance...release any temptation to hold...soften....allow yourself to releasewith each breath, soften and release..... Let go....notice the pain is loosening its grip as you soften....watch as the sensation of pain starts to float....so free that it floats and is free to dissolve.....watch as the discomfort dissipates, floating away....released with each breath.....

Become aware of the ease within your body.....perhaps it's a sensation similar to the opening of a flower or the rising of the sun.....notice the gentle sense of vitality that encompasses your body, your self.....energy that is free to sustain your being, redirected from pain or worry.....

Each time you allow yourself this experience of softening, letting go, of releasing----
your abilities are strengthened and you are reunited with your inner strength and
peace...your inner vitality and wholeness.
For now, become aware of yourself seated in a chair or on the floor or bed.....when you
are ready, you will be there, comforted, refreshed and renewed.