

Health Journeys' written transcripts of podcast audio files are provided for deaf and hard of hearing users of the Kaiser Permanente website in compliance with the American Disabilities Act. The transcripts and the podcasts are copyrighted material which cannot be reproduced, recorded nor published without direct permission from Health Journeys, www.healthjourneys.com 800.800.8661

Relaxation and Wellness Imagery

Welcome to this Healthy Living To Go podcast from Kaiser Permanente, designed to fit the way you live and the way you learn. Listen, live well, and thrive.

I'm Belleruth Naparstek, and this is guided imagery designed to help you rest, renew and heal. Guided imagery is gentle but powerful, and it can reach places inside of you that conscious thinking sometimes can't. It's been shown to help reduce anxiety, depression, pain and fatigue; improve self esteem and energy; and speed up healing while helping mind and body relax.

Try to listen to this once or twice a day for several weeks. You'll find that over time it will have a stronger and stronger effect. Different parts of this will probably capture your attention at different times. Always free to change or ignore whatever doesn't suit you. Your unconscious mind will probably do that for you anyway.

You don't need to pay perfect attention for this to work. In fact, your mind will probably drift in and out naturally. You may even fall asleep and it will still have an effect, especially with repeated listening. If you notice your mind wandering, you can gently guide it back. And because this imagery is designed to help you relax, it's best not to play it while driving. But you can listen to the affirmations any time.

And don't worry if it brings forth some unexpected emotion. That just means it's working for you in a deep way. If you position your hands the same way each time you listen, this will become a kind of conditioning cue. Later you'll be able to use it to move very quickly into a place of deep relaxation.

So for now, see if you can take this next while to commit yourself to this process of engaging the power of your imagination to help you heal, by gently immersing yourself in this safe and easy process. All you need to do is settle in, relax and let yourself listen...

To begin with, see if you can position yourself as comfortably as you can, shifting your weight so that your body is well supported... and gently allowing your eyes to close...

Becoming aware of the rise of your body as you breathe in... and the way it settles back down as you breathe out... so you can become more and more attuned to the feel of your breath moving in and out of your body...

And now, taking a nice, deep, full, cleansing breath... and breathing out, fully and completely... and with the next breath in, imagining that you're sending the warm energy of your breath to any part of your body that's sore or tense or tight... and releasing the tension with the exhale... so you can feel your breath going to all the tight, tense places... warming and loosening and softening them... and then, gathering up the tension... and breathing it out...

So that more and more, you can feel safe and comfortable... relaxed and easy... watching the cleansing action of your breath... arms and legs loose and comfortable... tension draining from fingers and toes...

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, your mind is empty... for just a split second, it is free and clear space... and you're blessed with stillness...

And any emotions you're feeling inside... those too can be noted and acknowledged and sent out with the breath... so that your emotional self can be still and quiet... like a lake with no ripples...

And now... imagining a place... where you feel safe and peaceful and easy... a place you used to go to... or go to now... or someplace you've always wanted to be... it could be by the ocean... or in the woods... or up in the mountains or desert... it doesn't matter... just so it's a place that feels good and safe and peaceful to you...

And allowing the place to become real to you... in all its dimensions... looking around you... enjoying the colors... the scenery... looking over to your left... and over to your right...

And feeling whatever you're sitting against or lying upon... whether you're leaning against a friendly, wide oak tree... or surrounded by sweet meadow grass... or walking in the woods, on a pungent carpet of pine needles... or you might be at the shore with cool, wet sand oozing between your toes, and gentle waves lapping at your ankles... or maybe you're just sitting on a nice, warm rock in the sun...

And listening to the sounds of the place... birds twittering... or the rustling sounds of a soft wind through the leaves... or the gentle soothing sound of a bubbling brook... just so you're letting your ears become attuned to all the beautiful sounds of this place... that is so safe and peaceful to you...

And smelling its rich fragrance... whether it's the sharp, bracing scent of salt sea air... the sweet, heavy fullness of meadow grass ... the pungent, dark green aroma of peat moss and pine in the forest... sometimes the air is so laden with scent, you can practically taste it on your tongue...

And noticing the feel of the air on your skin as it caresses your face and neck... and it might be crisp and dry... or balmy and wet... so you're just letting your skin enjoy the wonderful presence of this place... that is so safe and peaceful to you... and letting its healing presence caress you and soak into your skin... letting it fill you.... permeating muscle and tissue and bone... calming and soothing you, all the way down into each and every cell...

So with every breath, you're inhaling the nourishing beauty of this place... breathing it into your body... letting it soak into every part of you... all the way down, into your arms and legs... fingers and toes... infusing your whole body with peace and calm...

Able to feel the energy of this place forming a gently vibrating cushion all around you... softly surrounding and protecting you... becoming more and more palpable... and inside the cushion, you can feel safe and protected... relaxed and easy... able to take in whatever is nourishing to you... but insulated from whatever you don't want or need...

And now... imagining that this cushion of energy is drawing to it all the love and sweetness that has ever been felt for you by anyone at any time... feeling it pull in all the caring, all the loving kindness that has ever been sent your way... every prayer and good wish... every smile and gesture of gratitude... filling the field of energy around you... pulling it all in like a powerful magnet... calling every good wish home... and so increasing the powerful, protective field all around you...

And perhaps sensing the presence of those who have loved or nurtured you... those who love you now... or who will love you in the future... just the ones you want with you... and sensing them around you now...

People from your life... alive or long gone... there might even be a special animal ... standing guard... dear old friends... some remembered... some forgotten... visitors... or a grandparent... or a powerful ancestor, whose banner you've carried... a teacher, a guide... sweet spirits, magical beings... guardian angels... some familiar, some not... it doesn't matter... just so you feel their encouragement and support...

You might even catch a fleeting glimpse of somebody... maybe noticing an old familiar scent... or hearing the unique timbre of a dearly loved voice... possibly sensing a presence at your side or just behind you... or feeling the soft weight of a gentle hand...

And one might lean in to share some words of encouragement... and others might just be there to keep you company... signaling their reassurance... and seeing to your well being...

And suddenly you are certain... you know with your whole heart, your whole being... that all is well... that you are surrounded by protection ...seen and unseen... with you all the time... whenever you choose to notice... or acknowledge their presence... and that you are better for knowing this...

Feeling all through your body the warmth of this awareness... and the strength and calm that it brings... attuned to the peaceful stillness at your center...

And so... feeling relaxed and easy... arms and legs loose and heavy....while you continue to breathe ... in and out, strong and steady... still aware of the special place, the cushion of energy, the support, all around you...

So very gently and with soft eyes... you can allow yourself to come back into the room whenever you are ready... knowing in a deep place that you are better for this...

And so you are.....

Affirmations

Affirmations are positive statements designed for repeated listening, a sort of reprogramming of your unconscious mind to combat negative thinking. Over time, they can have a profound, cumulative effect. Some people find them easier to work with than guided imagery.

See if you can listen to each statement in a state of open, relaxed attention, breathing in deeply as you hear each one, and breathing out as you repeat it to yourself.

I know there are times I become frightened, discouraged, angry or sad, and I accept what I feel as my inner truth of the moment.

When I remember to feel my breath moving in and out of my body, slow and steady, I return to my own inner peace and calm.

More and more, I can allow myself to let go of worrying about things I cannot control, and focus on my own inner peacefulness.

I thank my body for all it has done for me in the past and all it will do for me in the future.

I am learning to trust my body and to make good use of the information it offers me.

More and more, I am learning to be gentle and considerate toward myself.

More and more, I am learning to save my energy for what truly matters to me.

More and more I am learning to pace myself.

I welcome my ability to cushion myself from jarring events, modulating my responses from this new seat of settled, balanced calm.

I salute my own courage, strength, endurance and fortitude.

More and more, I'm learning to focus my attention on what does me and my life the most good.

I welcome the return of my strength, vitality and sense of self.

I can see and feel a peaceful, balanced calm move all through my body.

I welcome my ability to listen to the wisdom of my body, telling me to rest, pace my energy and take gentle good care of myself.

More and more I can appreciate the inborn power of my body's beauty, intelligence, and ability to heal.

More and more I'm able to savor the gifts of the present.

I welcome my ability to appreciate the beauty of my own being.

More and more, I can take the time to touch a leaf, smell the morning air, and receive the caress of a soft breeze on my face.

More and more, I can take pleasure in the simple joys of living.

I welcome my new awareness of the peaceful power in my heart, the seat of my strength, and the home of my spirit.

I know that I am better and better able to listen to my body and sense what it needs.

I know that I'm more and more able to sense when I'm tired and give myself room to rest.

I'm better and better able to seek out environments that are nourishing to me, and avoid those that are not.

More and more, I can understand that my body is my ally, my oldest friend and my steadiest companion.

More and more, I'm able to be true to myself, judge by my own standards, and listen to the voice of my heart.

I am aware that with each breath in, I am sending precious oxygen and rich nutrients to the places that need them.

I am aware that with each breath out, I am releasing toxins and cleansing my cells.

I salute the healing action of my own breath.

I can see and feel radiant sunlight, entering and warming my body, sending peaceful joy and sweet healing deep inside.

I can see and feel a powerful blue-green wave of healing, washing through me from head to toe, clearing away any unwanted debris and taking it out with the tide.

I can see and feel a soft, warm, pulsing blanket of comfort surrounding me, and softly soaking its energy into me.

I know that I'm nourished and sustained by all the love and beauty that has ever come into my life.

When I remember to feel my breath, moving in and out of my body, I return to my own inner peace and calm.

More and more I can allow myself to let go of worrying about things I cannot control and focus on my own inner peacefulness.

I thank my body for all it has done for me in the past, and all it will do for me in the future.

I am learning to trust my body and to make good use of the information it offers me.

More and more I'm learning to be gentle and considerate toward myself.

I welcome my ability to listen to the wisdom of my body, telling me to rest, pace my energy and take gentle good care of myself.

More and more, I can appreciate the inborn power of my body's beauty, intelligence and ability to heal.

More and more, I'm able to savor the gifts of the present.

More and more, I can feel my mind getting clearer, my body stronger, my heart fuller, my energy freer.

I know that I have things to do, purposes to accomplish, gifts to give and I require a strong and healthy body for this.

More and more, I know that I am perfectly, utterly safe.

And so you are.