



Education

Stress Management: Mental Imaging

What is mental imaging?

This relaxation technique is also called autogenic training or guided imagery. It consists of mental exercises that create feelings of heaviness, warmth, and relaxation in your muscles.

How do I do this exercise?

Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down in a quiet room. Close your eyes. Breathe in slowly and deeply. Picture waves on a beach. As you breathe in, imagine the waves coming toward shore. As you breathe out, picture them moving away from the shore. Imagine the sun shining on you. Concentrate on muscle groups one at a time. Visualize the sun warming the area and feel this muscle group relax. While you visualize and feel the muscles relax, say to yourself, for example, "My forehead and scalp feel heavy, warm, loose, and relaxed." Do the exercise for each of the following muscle groups:

- forehead and scalp
- eyes
- nose
- face
- tongue
- jaws
- lips
- neck
- right arm
- left arm
- back
- chest
- stomach
- buttocks and thighs
- right leg
- left leg.

Do these exercises twice a day. Each exercise session should last 5 to 10 minutes.

There are other relaxation methods you may want to try, such as diaphragmatic breathing and progressive muscle relaxation.

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