

VISUALIZATION

Visualization uses the power of the **imagination** to calm the mind and relax the body. Visualization is part of everyday life: recalling memories, daydreaming, thinking about people, places, things, imagining a conversation, etc. Visualizing a peaceful scene or place can relax and rejuvenate the mind and body. Visualization can be an effective way to clear your mind of the clutter of the day and of worries that keep you from falling asleep. It is an integral part of Performance Rehearsal. Visualizing yourself succeeding at an important goal helps to harness the power of your mind to accomplish it.

Benefits

Visualization is effective for many stress-related and physical illnesses including: headaches, muscle spasms, anxiety, PTSD, and chronic pain. It can be an effective antidote to insomnia by allowing the mind and body to relax sufficiently to enter a deeper, restorative state of sleep. Visualization can calm and center the mind for improved concentration, memory, and brain power. It can be used to create a safe and peaceful place in the mind for taking a break from a stressful or fearful situation.

Technique

Fully engaging all of your senses in Visualization makes it more real and powerful. Notice the images that naturally arise in your mind of a peaceful and relaxing scene. Mentally zero in on all aspects of sight: Vivid colors, shapes, & textures. Add sound, touch, taste, and smell. The more clearly you visualize, the more relaxing and calming it is.

Possible Visualizations:

- Real or imagined places and scenes: Beach, Mountains, etc.
- Favorite relaxing activities
- A safe or relaxing room or place
- Peaceful and happy memories with family and friends.
- Images of relaxation like sun warming the body, or melting like wax
- Tension or pain having a shape texture, or color that changes.

Visualization Example:

Notice your breathing. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. Allow each breath to become a little slower until you feel relaxation spreading through your body. In your mind's eye see a pathway or stairway that will take you step by step to a peaceful, relaxing, safe place in your mind. It can be a real place or a place in your imagination. See the pathway open up to this place, which represents your calm center. Notice what it is about this place that is soothing and relaxing. Notice what you see: the colors, shapes, movement. Feel what it is like to be in this place. Notice the sounds, smells, what you sense and feel. Absorb the peace and tranquility into your mind and body. You may feel the warmth of the sun on your face and body relaxing your muscles. Notice how good it feels to relax and how easy it is to return to this place whenever you want.

More Information

Live Strong: www.livestrong.com/article/249993-visualization-techniques-for-stress-management/

Health Journeys: www.healthjourneys.com/what_is_guided_imagery.asp

Web MD: www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/tc/guided-imagery-topic-overview