

## **What is guided imagery?**

Guided imagery is a safe, effective way to find freedom from tension and stress. It focuses on the connection between mind and body, using the imagination to achieve a state of calm or relaxation. Although it is not a substitute for medical treatment, you may use it effectively in conjunction with treatments for many different illnesses.

## **How can guided imagery help me?**

Guided imagery has been used for hundreds of years. Research shows guided imagery can ease pain and nausea, lower blood pressure and heart rate, and improve sleep. Guided imagery is often used for depression and anxiety, to address the effects of cancer treatment, and for chronic pain management.

## **Steps of guided imagery:**

1. Find a place where you will not be interrupted.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Take a few deep breaths and notice your body relaxing.
4. Picture a scene where you are very relaxed. This scene is often different for different people. Some may choose a setting such as a beach, forest, or the mountains - whatever is relaxing to you.
5. Become fully involved in your imagination. Try to use all of your senses. What can you hear? Smell? Touch? See? Staying in this exercise for 10-15 minutes is ideal, but it can be adapted depending on how much time is available.
6. Slowly deepen your breaths and bring your awareness back to your body.
7. When you are ready, open your eyes and notice any relaxation or recharging in your body or mind.

For further information on guided imagery, visit:

<http://www.mccancer.org/support/managing-emotions/complementary-therapies/guided-imagery>

**For more information:**

- University of Michigan Depression Center
- 1-800-475-MICH or 734-936-4400
- <http://www.depressioncenter.org/toolkit>

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 04/2018