

Using Guided Imagery to Manage Stress

Do you have difficulty letting go of stress? A busy day can leave the mind racing and the muscles tense. Guided imagery — similar to daydreaming — is one way to let go of the day's worries. These steps will help you move into a more relaxed state:

- ▶ Sit or lie comfortably and close your eyes.
- ▶ Imagine a relaxing scene, such as a quiet stroll in the park.
- ▶ Involve as many of your senses as possible. For example, if you are envisioning a beach, imagine seeing the blue sky, hearing the waves crash, feeling the warm



sun, and smelling and tasting the salt air. Specific details will make the scene feel more real.

- ▶ Keep the scene fixed in your mind while repeating an affirmation. Examples: "I'm releasing tension now" or "I'm letting go of stress."

Engaging in guided imagery for a few minutes each day will leave you feeling refreshed and better able to handle the day-to-day stresses of life. In addition, try incorporating these tips into your daily routine:

- ▶ **Decide to be happy.** "Happiness" is largely about how you perceive the world around you. Choosing to see the glass half full will make it easier to let go of stress and disappointment.
- ▶ **Focus on the positive.** Instead of focusing on why you can't do something, think about why you can. Breaking out of negative thinking will help you take a positive approach to solving problems.
- ▶ **Practice yoga and meditation.** Yoga will help you to relax, both mentally and physically. Consider adding a short period of meditation or guided imagery to the end of your yoga routine.
- ▶ **Be open to new experiences.** The world is a more interesting place when you are open to possibilities. It's less stressful too!

LifeMatters can provide suggestions on managing stress and improving wellbeing. Call 24/7/365.

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