

Guided Imagery—A Walk on the Beach

This is a time for relaxation. During this exercise you will take an imaginary walk on your favorite beach. Make yourself comfortable. You may want to sit or lie down...loosening any tight clothing and adjusting your position so you can relax.

Begin to let go of tension and relax your body. Scan your whole body for any tense spot. Bring your attention to this tense area. Allow the tension to gradually disappear. Imagine the tension melting away with each breath in and out. A sense of relaxation spreads to the whole body.

Take a few deep breaths. With each breath, you breathe IN relaxation and breathe OUT tension and fatigue. Feel your body sinking more and more into deep relaxation.

On a warm and bright summer afternoon, you decide to take a walk on your favorite beach by yourself. The path leading to the ocean is surrounded by wild golden bushes. Everything along the path smells of sea and sun. Butterflies are flapping their wings above the goosefoot and the pollen stirred by the butterflies is visible in the afternoon sunshine. A salty ocean breeze is gently caressing your face. The late afternoon sun is warming your skin and is gilding the whole area with a spectacular hue of gold. The vast and endless blue sky is decorated with a few floating white clouds. You can hear the rustling of leaves of tall palm trees not far from the shores. In the distance seagulls are gliding over the blue ocean. Their cries often reach your ears. Together with waves from the ocean, it forms a tranquilizing orchestra.

Arriving at the beach, you are pleased by the pure white and soft sand, as you have always been. The beach extends on both sides endlessly. A few beautiful shells like gems in the sand are sparking in the sunshine. You decide to take off your shoes and walk barefooted. The grains of warm sand

massage your bare feet. The sound of the waves washing up against the shore is peaceful and tranquilizing.

You keep walking along the shore. Once in a while, you bend down and pick up a few shining seashells.

As you walk further along the shore, you decide to stop for a rest. You sit down on a mound of pure white sand and gaze out at the sea, gazing peacefully at the rhythmic and cyclical motion of the waves rolling into shore. Everything is wonderful. This whole gorgeous coast, with its sand dunes, sandy beaches, piles of seaweed, palm trees, and seagulls, all belongs to you alone. You feel so peaceful. Free. And at one with everything around you. Time slows down to a halt.

Your mind begins to drift, being carried away by this intoxicating feeling of peace and tranquility...

(Pause)

Each wave breaks against the coast, rising slowly upward along the beach, leaving an area of white foam. Slowly the wave retreats back out to sea, only to be replaced by another wave that washes up against the shore...working its way up the beach...then slowly retreating back out to sea.

With each motion of the wave as it glides in and then out, you find yourself feeling more and more relaxed. The tranquility creates a sense of calmness and peace.

You forget about time. You don't know how much time has passed. You realize that the sun is lower and lower on the horizon. The sky is turning brilliant colors of red...orange...yellow...while the sun sets, sinking down...down into the horizon. You feel very relaxed and soothed. You continue to watch the sun as it descends.

The tranquilizing sound of the waves, the smell and taste of the sea and seaweed, the cries of the seagulls, the warmth of sunshine against your body—all of these sights, sounds, and smells leave you feeling very calm, refreshed, and relaxed.

(Pause)

Notice how deeply relaxed your mind and body feel right now...Remind yourself that you can create these feelings on your own during your daily activities.

Remember that periodically during any day you may scan your body, discover any tension you are holding and then inhale relaxation and exhale the tension and tightness. Come back to this place as often as you like or create your own getaway. Relax—renew —recharge your mind and body.

When you are ready to wake up your body and your mind, and return to the present, give yourself a few moments to do so.

Return your awareness to your surroundings and notice the real environment you are in.

Let your muscles wake up by opening and closing your hands, shrugging your shoulders, moving around a bit.

Keep with you the feeling of peace and calm you had while you were relaxing, as you open your eyes and sit quietly for a moment.

When you are awake and alert, you can return to your usual activities, knowing that you can return to this place in your mind whenever you want to relax.