

Sensory Relief – Guided Imagery

Guided Imagery Script

Please utilize this guided imagery script to lead a group relaxation session.

Start reading the beach visualization relaxation script here:

Get comfortable. Sit in a supportive chair or lie on your back.

Relax your body by releasing any areas of tension. Allow your arms to go limp... then your legs...

Feel your arms and legs becoming loose and relaxed...

Now relax your neck and back by relaxing your spine... release the hold of your muscles all the way from your head, down your neck... along each vertebra to the tip of your spine...

Breathe deeply into your diaphragm, drawing air fully into your lungs... and release the air with a whooshing sound...

Breathe in again, slowly... pause for a moment... and breathe out...

Draw a deep breath in... and out...

In... out...

Become more and more relaxed with each breath...

Feel your body giving up all the tension... becoming relaxed... and calm... peaceful...

Feel a wave of relaxation flow from the soles of your feet, to your ankles, lower legs, hips, pelvic area, abdomen, chest, back, hands, lower arms, elbows, upper arms, shoulders, neck, back of your head, face, and the top of your head...

Allow your entire body to rest heavily on the surface where you sit or lie. Now that your body is fully relaxed, allow the visualization relaxation to begin.

Imagine you are walking toward the ocean... walking through a beautiful, tropical forest...

You can hear the waves up ahead... you can smell the ocean spray... the air is moist and warm... feel a pleasant, cool breeze blowing through the trees...

You walk along a path... coming closer to the sea... as you come to the edge of the trees, you see the brilliant aqua color of the ocean ahead...

You walk out of the forest and onto a long stretch of white sand... the sand is very soft powder... imagine taking off your shoes, and walking through the hot, white sand toward the water...

The beach is wide and long...

Hear the waves crashing to the shore...

Smell the clean salt water and beach...

You gaze again toward the water... it is a bright blue green...



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See the waves washing up onto the sand... and receding back toward the ocean... washing up... and flowing back down... enjoy the ever-repeating rhythm of the waves...

Imagine yourself walking toward the water... over the fine, hot sand... you are feeling very hot...

As you approach the water, you can feel the mist from the ocean on your skin. You walk closer to the waves, and feel the sand becoming wet and firm...

A wave washes over the sand toward you... and touches your toes before receding...

As you step forward, more waves wash over your feet... feel the cool water provide relief from the heat...

Walk further into the clear, clean water... you can see the white sand under the water... the water is a pleasant, relaxing temperature... providing relief from the hot sun... cool but not cold...

You walk further into the water if you wish... swim if you want to... enjoy the ocean for a few minutes... allow the visualization relaxation to deepen... more and more relaxed... enjoy the ocean...

Now you are feeling calm and refreshed...

You walk back out of the water and onto the beach...

Stroll along the beach at the water's edge... free of worries... no stress... calm... enjoying this holiday...

Up ahead is a comfortable lounge chair and towel, just for you...

Sit or lie down in the chair or spread the towel on the sand... relax on the chair or towel... enjoying the sun... the breeze... the waves...

You feel peaceful and relaxed... allow all your stresses to melt away...

When you are ready to return from your vacation, do so slowly...

Bring yourself back to your usual level of alertness and awareness...

Keep with you the feeling of calm and relaxation... feeling ready to return to your day...

Open your eyes, stretch your muscles... and become fully alert... refreshed... and filled with energy.

You can practice this visualization relaxation as often as you wish, to provide a mental vacation whenever you need it. Visualization relaxation is a skill that can be learned; the more you practice, the more skilled you will become and more effectively you will be able to relax using visualization relaxation.



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Source: Inner Health Studio Beach Visualization Relaxation: Free Relaxation Script. <https://www.innerhealthstudio.com/visualization-relaxation.html>

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Sensory Relief – Self Massage

Learn the Art of Self Massage

Massage helps reduce muscle tension and stiffness in numerous ways, including increasing blood flow to your muscles. Some research shows that regular massage may also boost immunity by stimulating the production of white blood cells. Massage helps you relax and improve your mental energy. It may also make you more productive at work.

One University of Miami study found that a brief self-massage at work reduced stress and boosted job performance. After a 15-minute massage, workers were more alert and could complete math problems faster and with more accuracy.

“Most people practice the art of self-massage without thinking about it, whether they are rubbing their forehead because of a headache, scrubbing themselves with a loofah sponge in the shower, or rubbing their feet after a long day,” says Anna Walsemann, a yoga and oriental healing instructor at New Age Health Spa in Neversink, New York. “These are all simple and natural self-massage techniques.”

You don't have to take a class to learn these techniques. Follow these simple tips to help reduce tension from head to foot!

- 1. Every morning and evening, hammer out the kinks.** Using your fists, gently thump the outside of your body, starting with your legs and arms, working from top to bottom. Then move inward to your torso and thump from bottom to top. “Pummeling your muscles and bones will help strengthen the body, stimulate blood circulation, and relax nerve endings,” says Walsemann. When done in the morning, this self-massage technique will waken and prepare your body – and mind – for the day ahead. When done before bed, it calms down the mind and beats out the stress and tension of the day. One warning: If you're taking any kind of blood thinner, such as Coumadin (warfarin), avoid this technique, as it may cause bruising.
- 2. Rub your belly after every meal.** Most of us do this instinctively, especially after overeating. Place one or both palms on your abdomen and rub it in clockwise circles. This is the same direction food naturally moves through your intestine, so your circular massage will help to stimulate digestion.
- 3. Rub yourself down before and after exercise.** Massaging your body before your stretching, cardio, or strength training increases blood flow to the muscles. Massaging your muscles after exercise may help encourage waste removal and speed muscle recovery. Before exercise, use a pummeling motion with your fists to bring blood flow to your leg and arm muscles. After exercise, rub along your muscles with your palm or fist, moving in the direction of your heart.
- 4. Give your hands a massage every day – whenever you put on lotion.** Start with the bottoms of your palms by clasping your fingers and rubbing the heels of your palms together in a circular motion. Then, with your hands still clasped, take one thumb and massage the area just below your other thumb in circular motions, moving outward to the center of the palm. Repeat with the other hand. Then release your fingers and use your thumbs and index fingers to knead your palms, wrists, and the webbing between your fingers. With one hand, gently pull each finger of the other hand. Finish by using your thumb and index finger to pinch the webbing between your other thumb and index finger.

Sensory Relief – Self Massage

5. Roll on a tennis ball whenever you feel tight. If your foot feels tense, stand with one hand on a wall for support and place the arch of one foot on top of the ball. Gradually add more body weight over the foot, allowing the ball to press into your arch. Begin to slowly move your foot, allowing the ball to massage your heel, forefoot, and toes. Note: If the tennis ball seems too big for your foot, try a golf ball instead.

You can also lie on the ball to get at that hard-to-reach spot between the shoulder blades or to soothe tension in your low back. For tight hips, sit on the ball, wiggling your bottom around and holding it in areas of tension.

How to Self-Massage

You can easily learn to massage yourself. Use self-massage to energize yourself. You do not need to undress, but you must be comfortable. Use massage oil if you are massaging on bare skin. Sit in a chair, on the floor, or lie down with your knees bent and your feet on the floor. Don't forget to wash your hands first before placing them near your eyes.

Scalp: Spread your fingers apart and tuck your thumbs behind your ears. Knead your fingertips into your scalp, tracing small circles as you move across your head.

Eyes: Don't worry – it's not your eyeballs you'll be massaging here. One way to soothe strained eyes is to first rub your hands together to warm them up and then cup them over your eyes. The base of your palm fits nicely along the curve of your cheekbones as your fingers extend over the top of your forehead and gently massage in a circular motion. Another eye-easer is to shut your eyes and use your ring fingers to press gently on the point beneath your eyebrows near the bridge of your nose. Press for 5-10 seconds, release, and repeat a few times.

Nose: The tip of your nose is mostly soft cartilage and won't get much from a massage, but the parts of your nose more connected to your sinuses might. Begin with your fingertips on the bridge of your nose between your eyes and let them slide down and along the tops of your cheekbones.

Face: Boost circulation to your skin by first rubbing your hands together to warm them up. Then lightly press your palms to your forehead, pulling your hands down your face across your cheeks and down to your chin. Press circles on your cheek a few times, as though you were washing your face.

Ears: Self-massage can relieve headaches. Gently squeeze and rub the outer edge of your ear between your thumb and index finger. Move gradually from the top of the ear down to the earlobe. Tug softly on your earlobe a few times. Repeat as many times as you'd like and switch to the other ear.

Jaw: Even the mellowest among us clench our jaws sometimes. You can rub light circles at the point at which your lower jaw attaches to your skull, near the temporomandibular joint. Your jaw may also benefit from massaging wider circles over the masseter and temporalis muscles. The masseter is the square muscle over your cheekbone, and the temporalis can be found above your ear.

Sensory Relief – Self Massage

Neck: Modern life is full of ways to strain the neck – leaning in to read small print on your computer or just sitting in a seat all day. Use the heels of your hands to work circles into the taut muscles at the sides of your neck. Change to fingertip pressure to drum down the sides from behind your ears down toward your shoulders.

Shoulders: So much tension can be stored in the muscles of your shoulders. Just reach an arm across the front of your body and press circles firmly into muscles above the opposite shoulder blade. Switch sides.

Additional:

1. *Stroke your right shoulder with your left hand. Starting at the base of your skull, stroke down the side of your neck, over your shoulder and down your arm to the elbow. Glide back to your neck and repeat at least three times. Then do the other side.*
2. *Make circular pressures with your fingertips on either side of the spine. Work up the neck and around the base of the skull. Then squeeze and release the flesh on each shoulder and at the top of your arms.*
3. *Loosely clench your left hand into a fist and gently pound your right shoulder. Keep your wrist flexible. This can be very invigorating if you are tired. Repeat on the other side.*
4. *Finish by stroking smoothly with both hands. Start with your hands on the side of your face and glide them gently down under your chin. Slide your hands past each other at the front of the neck, so that each hand is on the opposite shoulder. Stroke gently over your shoulders, down your arms and off at the fingertips. Repeat as often as you like. This hypnotic stroke can relieve headaches and tension.*

Hands: Relaxation and stress relief go hand-in-hand with this massage. If you'd like, add a dollop of lotion to your hand before beginning to smooth the way. Using the opposite hand, squeeze each finger with circling pressure around the joints from base to tip. Tug gently to stretch each finger. And don't forget the spaces in between! With your palm facing down, stroke your thumb between the tendons on the back of your hand that run down from the fingers. Take each finger between the opposite thumb and index finger and rub small circles from tip to wrist, first on the back of your hand then on the palm. Switch hands and repeat.

Additional:

1. *Stroke the back of your hand, pushing firmly up toward the wrist and gliding back gently. Then squeeze the hand all over, pressing it between your palm and your fingers.*
2. *Squeeze each finger and make circular pressures over the joints with your thumb. Then hold the finger at its base and pull it gently to stretch it, sliding your grip up the finger and off the tip.*
3. *Stroke between the tendons on the back of the hand with your thumb. Stroke in the furrow to the wrists, doing four strokes in each furrow.*
4. *Turn your hand over and support the back with your fingers. Do firm circular and static pressures with your thumb, working all over the palm and around the wrist.*
5. *Finish the massage by stroking the palm of your hand from the fingers to the wrist. Push into it with the heel of your other hand, then glide gently back and repeat.*

Sensory Relief – Self Massage

Belly: Try this one after a meal to support healthy digestion. Put one hand on top of the other just above your belly button and rub lightly in clockwise circles. Continue for a few minutes, breathing deeply as you go.

Torso: Down low on the sides of your back and nestled beneath the soft flesh above your waistline are your kidneys. Rubbing this area with your fists in quick circles is said to deliver a boost of energy.

Legs: Depending on your size, the legs present a self-massage challenge. With their varied terrain, you'll need to alternate between stroking, kneading, and drumming. Give yourself a strong foundation by resting your foot flat with your knee bent. With one hand on each side of your leg, stroke up from ankle to thigh. When you get up there, knead into the fleshy part of your thigh as if it were dough and then drum the outsides and fronts. Use your fingertips to gently massage circles around your kneecap. Put both hands to work kneading your calf muscle and finish off with broad strokes up and down the leg. Switch legs.

Feet: In terms of self-massage, your feet are a lot like your hands – except they're farther away and potentially harder to reach. Sit in a chair that allows you to comfortably cross one leg onto the opposite knee. First apply some lotion to the tops and soles of your feet. Then grip the fingers of one hand between your toes, much like you would when you hold hands with someone. Lightly tug the toes up as the heel of your hand rubs the top of your foot. This also gives the tendons between your toes a good stretch. At the same time, you can put the thumb of the other hand to work kneading into the sole of your foot. After you've done this for a while, turn your attention to the tops of your feet. Massage your thumbs into the top of the foot in opposing circles.

Additional:

- 1. Put one hand on the top of your foot and the other under the sole. Stroke smoothly from your toes to your ankles. Glide your hands back to your toes and repeat.*
- 2. Support your foot with one hand and work on each toe individually. Squeeze each toe firmly, and gently stretch with a gentle pull.*
- 3. With one thumb on top of the other, do a line of firm pressures down the center of the sole and lines on either side. Then, with one thumb, do circular pressures on the arch and ball.*
- 4. Support your foot with one hand and make the other into a loose fist. Do knuckling movements all over the sole by rippling your fingers around in small circular movements.*
- 5. Still holding your foot with one hand, hack the sole with your other hand. Flick your hand away the moment you touch the foot, so that the effect is light and springy.*
- 6. Stroke around the ankle with your fingertips, as you stroke up toward the leg and gently as you glide back. Finish by stroking the foot as you did at the beginning.*

Sensory Relief – Self Massage

Your own hands are your greatest assets, but you can add a few simple, affordable tools to your self-massage kit.

Tennis balls: At about a dollar each, tennis balls are the go-to tool for many thrifty self-massagers. Roll a ball beneath your foot while you work. Place it behind your back on your chair and gently roll the ball across the muscles of your middle and lower back, between tense shoulders. Tuck it low on the side of your back for a gentle but energizing kidney massage. Stash a tennis ball beneath your thigh and rub around into a sore hamstring. Or sit on it to release tight glutes. You can even use it to strengthen your greatest self-massage tool – your hands – by squeezing and releasing your grip around the ball.

Baoding balls: These palm-sized spheres originated in China as a tool for exercising the hands and improving dexterity. Usually constructed of iron, these balls are meant to be rotated, two at a time, in the palm of the hand. Consider using Baoding balls to strengthen your hands and grip for more effective massage.

Foam rollers: Use these pliable foam tubes to roll across tight, sore muscles. Rollers help you use your own body weight to massage hard-to-reach spots, like in the middle of your back, along the sides of your thighs, or along your glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps and calves.

Massage oils: Nothing fancy necessary here. All you really need is something to smooth the way as your hands move across your skin. Popular and affordable choices include avocado oil, sweet almond oil, olive oil and shea butter. Regular, low-cost body lotion is also an option.



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Source: The Healthy (August 20, 2019) Learn the Art of Self-Massage. <https://www.thehealthy.com/alternative-medicine/learn-the-art-of-self-massage/>

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