

M&M Hour

Meditation and Mindfulness Groups

For all students who seek rest, renewal, and relaxation

PEACEFUL PLACE VISUALIZATION

Adapted from Davis, Eshelman, & McKay (2000)

Description

This practice involves breathing and visualization to increase your mindfulness, promote relaxation, and reduce stress. The peaceful place visualization involves using your imagination to create a special place to make a private retreat for relaxation and guidance. In imagining your peaceful place, allow room for an inner guide or other safe person to be with you. This inner guide can teach you how to more deeply and fully relax and help you understand what is causing your stress.

Background

Breathing: Breathing is a necessity of life that most people take for granted. As you learn to be aware of your breathing and practice slowing and normalizing your breaths, your mind will quiet and your body will relax. Breathing awareness and good breathing habits will enhance your psychological and physical well-being, whether you practice them alone or in combination with other relaxation techniques. Breathing exercises are effective in reducing anxiety, stress, depression, irritability, muscle tension, headaches, and fatigue.

Visualization: Visualization is a practice of using your imagination to relax and reduce stress. Everyone visualizes. Daydreams, memories, and inner talk are all types of visualization. You can harness your visualizations and consciously employ them for furthering your goals. Visualizations can consciously train your body to relax and reduce stress. Visualization also is helpful in treating many stress-related and physical illnesses, including headaches, muscle spasms, chronic pain, and anxiety.

Practice

1. Sit comfortably in a quiet place free from distractions, loosen your clothing, and close your eyes softly.
2. Conduct a mental scan of your body, starting with your toes and moving up your body. Notice the sensations in your body, including sensations of tension or relaxation.
3. Practice mindful breathing for several minutes. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen. Exhale slowly through your mouth. Take long, slow, deep breaths. Focus on the sound and feeling of the breathing as you become more and more relaxed.
4. When you feel relaxed, use your imagination to create a peaceful place. Make your place peaceful, comfortable, and safe. Fill your place with details that involve all your senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.
5. After you have imagined this peaceful place for several minutes, invite an inner guide to your peaceful place. Ask this inner guide to show you how to relax.

Application

You can get the most benefit from this breathing and visualization exercise if you practice it on a daily basis.

The best time of the day for me to practice this exercise is: _____