



Guided Imagery for Pain Relief

As you've learned, our mind plays an important role in our experience of pain or discomfort. Right now we're going to use our mind to change the way it thinks about pain sensation. It will be interesting to see in what ways this will change your experience of pain today.

If you are comfortable doing so, I invite you to close your eyes. This will help your imagination to do its best work. Imagine the color of your pain. Perhaps it is bright red like a fire. It might be a dull, dark color like steel grey. Perhaps it is icy blue.

Once you can clearly see the color of your pain, think about the shape of your pain. Is it a round blob? Does it have sharp pointy edges? Does it look like a familiar object? Take a moment and think about the shape of your pain.

Now that you've got the color and the shape, think about the size. Is your pain small and just in the area where it hurts you most? Is your pain large and taking over your body? Think about how big this pain is.

Now that you've got a clear picture of the color, shape, and size of your pain we're ready to take a trip to the central control station in your brain. To do this, use your eyes to look inwards. Watch as you navigate through your brain. Up and down all of the structures in your mind. Traveling deep into your brain, you are looking for a control board. Your control board will be a panel with a lot of levers and dials. This control panel is responsible for the color, shape, and size of the pain you've identified. Take your time to reach the control center. Once you're there take three slow deep breaths. Good job.

Now, your task is to find the lever to change the size of the pain you've identified. The lever is marked with 0 at the bottom and ten at the top. Pulling this lever will change the size of your pain. This is actually a very heavy lever, but you find when you reach up to grab it that you are stronger than you thought.



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You reach up to this large lever and begin to pull. Notice as you take the lever from 10 down to 8 that the size of your pain has begun to shrink. Apply pressure to this lever and shrink your pain from an 8 to a 6. Continue to pull on this lever and keep watching as your pain continues to shrink. From a 6 to a 4. Now from a 4 to a 2. And now pull it all the way down to the bottom and notice how small the size of your pain has become.

Now that you've got this much smaller, much more manageable piece of pain, I want you to look in your control center for a color dial. This dial shows the color of your pain. So, if you identified your pain as being red, this dial is red. If your pain was grey, or blue, or purple, the dial will also be that color. Find the dial on the control panel. Now I'll pause while you take three slow deep breaths. Good job.

Now if you look closely at this color dial, you'll see around the dial there is a color guide that goes from a bright color to a very pale color. For example, it might go from bright red to pale pink, or from dark blue to a light sky blue. Your job now is to turn the dial from the intense color to the palest color. Turn it slowly and carefully and watch as your piece of pain transforms from being intensely colored to being very pale. It may even appear transparent or completely see through. Take your time. It's sometimes very easy to turn this dial, and sometimes it takes a little bit of effort. When you've reached the palest, lightest, most see through color on your dial, take three nice, slow, deep breaths. Good job.

Now, all we have left to do is transform the shape of this piece of pain. You've now got a small, softly colored piece of pain. The last step is the easiest. This requires very little effort. Look on your control panel for a touch screen. You'll see the shape of your pain on this touch screen panel. You can now gently touch any sharp edges on your piece of pain. When you touch these edges on the touch screen, they will round out into soft, smooth, edges. You can also drag lines on this touch screen to change the shape entirely. Now is your opportunity to change your pain into a soft, flexible shape without any hard edges. Make it smooth. Make it soft. When you're done, take three slow, deep, relaxing breaths.

Very nicely done! Now, with your eyes still closed, take a moment to see what your pain looks like. Notice how much smaller, lighter, softer, and more transparent your pain has become. You may have even been so successful that your pain has become too small to see. If so that's wonderful!



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Take a moment to really enjoy this experience. Be aware of how still your arms and legs have become. Perhaps your body feels heavier or warmer than before. With every slow deep breath, notice how peaceful your body feels.

I'm going to count down from ten slowly and when I reach one, you can open your eyes. Know that you can carry this relaxing and comfortable feeling with you even after you open your eyes. This feeling is yours to enjoy.

If you're doing this exercise for the first time, once you open your eyes, you can turn to the relaxation section of your workbook and draw a picture of what your pain looked like before you completed this exercise and after. Be sure to share your experience with your parents so they can see what an amazing job you did changing your pain.

10.....9.....8 Start to just become aware of the room around you.

7.....6.....5..... Take a deep breath and start to wiggle your fingers and toes.

4.....3.....2..... Give a big head to toe stretch.

1.... Open your eyes feeling calm and refreshed.