

Guided Imagery: The Beach

By: Prentiss Price, Ph.D.

For a few moments allow yourself to take several nice, long, deep breaths. Notice the cool air coming in, filling your lungs, and the soothing warm air going out. Just let all your thoughts float away as you bring your attention to your breathing... in and out. You might mentally scan your body and notice if you're holding any tension in your muscles. If you are, just gently let all that tension melt away with every out breath.... bring your attention to your breathing, in and out.... in and out... let yourself feel more and more comfortable sitting where you are.

In your mind's eye you see yourself descending down a long, narrow, wooden stairway towards a beautiful, inviting beach. Your bare feet feel the rough weathered steps, and with each step, you feel more and more tension gently melting away from your body. As you continue down the stairway, you notice how the bright white sand stretches down the shoreline as far as you can see. The ocean is a deep shade of blue with the fine white crests of the waves sweeping towards the shore. You reach the end of the stairway and step down, sinking into the warm soothing sand. As you rub the sand lightly between your toes, a soothing sensation of relaxation gently melts through your entire body. The roaring sounds of the sea's surf, the waves crashing over each other, calms your mind and allows you to feel even more relaxed.

You begin walking slowly towards the edge of the water and notice the warm sun on your face and shoulders. The salty smell of the sea air invigorates you, and you take in a deep breath... breathe slowly out... and feel more relaxed and refreshed. Finally, you reach the water's edge and you gladly invite the waves to flow over your toes and ankles. You watch the waves glide smoothly towards you, gently sweeping around your feet, and the trails of sea water that flow slowly back out again. The cool water feels soft and comforting as you enjoy a few moments allowing yourself to gaze out on the far reaching horizon. Overhead, you notice two seagulls gracefully soaring high above the ocean waters, and you can hear their soft cries becoming faint as they glide away. And all of these sights, sounds, and sensations allow you to let go and relax more and more.

After a moment you begin strolling down the beach at the water's edge. You feel a cool gentle breeze pressing lightly against your back, and with every step you feel yourself relaxing more and more. As you walk down the beach you notice the details of sights and sounds around you, and soothing sensations of the sun, the breeze, and the sand below your feet.

As you continue your leisurely walk down the beach, you notice a colorful beach chair resting in a nice peaceful spot where the powdery soft sand lies undisturbed. You approach this comfortable looking beach chair, then you sit down, lie back, and settle in. You take in a long deep breath, breathe slowly out, and feel even more relaxed and comfortable resting in your chair. For a few moments more, let yourself enjoy the sights and sounds of this beautiful day on the beach. And, when you feel ready, you can gently bring your attention back to the room... still letting yourself feel nice and comfortable sitting where you are.

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