

A HANDWARMING GUIDED IMAGERY SCRIPT

Begin by getting into a comfortable position, resting in a chair, lying down on a couch or bed and take three deep breaths. As you are breathing in and out you can begin to allow relaxation and comfort to flow through you, however, that feels to you. Starting from your eyelids allowing relaxation to flow up, over your forehead. This relaxation can flow up, over the top of the head, spreading through all of your scalp and down the back of your head, flowing down, down into the muscles at the back of your neck. All those muscles there just beginning to relax in your own way and as you allow comfort and relaxation to flow through and down now, down from your eyelids, down through your face.

Relaxation trickling down, rather like rain on a window pane. Relaxation flowing down, down your cheeks, your jaw so you are not clenching your teeth together and into the muscles at the front of your neck. All of the muscles in your head, your face and neck just beginning to relax. And it may be that your head feels a little heavier and if you wish, you can allow it to move into its most comfortable position to one side or the other or to be supported even more by the back of the chair. Feeling the head completely supported. And you can allow the same feeling of relaxation and comfort to begin to spread and flow out across your shoulders and down, down into your arms. Flowing its path in your minds' eye, flowing all the way down. Down through all of the muscles at the top of your arms. Across your elbows, down through the lower arms into your hands. Even into your fingers. Right to the tips of your fingers.

All of the muscles in your arms beginning to relax, beginning to let go of any tension that relaxation and feeling of comfort flowing all the way down, that's right. All of the muscles beginning to feel looser, more comfortable. You can allow that relaxed feeling and comfort to flow down through your body, down from the back of your neck through all the muscles in your back. Flowing all the way down like a stream. Through these muscles on either side of the spine this relaxation flowing down all the way to the base of the back and all of these muscles begin to relax and then your body can sink a little more into the comfort of the chair and going down from the front of the neck allowing that relaxation to flow down through all of the muscles in and around your chest so that you are only using the muscles you need to breath easily and comfortably, only those muscles you need to use. Down through all of the muscles around the waist, your tummy, your abdomen, and all those muscles beginning to relax, to feel more comfortable and you can gradually become aware of the deeper state of comfort.

Allowing that same relaxation to flow down, down into your legs, flowing all the way down. Down through your thighs, through the muscles at the front, at the back and the sides of your thighs, flowing all the way through. All of those muscles gradually beginning to feel looser, more relaxed, down across your knees, into you calf muscles flowing all the way down into your feet, right to the ends of your toes so that even the tiniest muscles are beginning to relax. Letting go of any tension and your feet can feel as though you have been wearing g a pair of tight shoes that you have just taken off and your feet can spread out a little and as you just rest, relaxing g more and more with each breath you take, all of the muscles letting go of any tension, any remaining tension draining down, down and out and out through the soles of your feet. Feeling more and more comfortable. More and more relaxed. Every muscle which you don't need to use right now relaxing.

In your mind's eye, imagine walking down a path that leads to a beautiful beach. As you arrive, use all your senses and notice the colors, the smells, the sounds, the objects, and the feel of this place. You may be all alone at this beach or there could be strangers, friends or even animals who have joined you. Everything is exactly as you would like it to be. This place is just perfect for you today. It is comfortable and warm and safe in this place. You can hear the ocean waves, smell the salt sea air and feel the warmth of the sand against your toes. Find a spot on the beach where you can rest a while, perhaps sitting or lying down. Feel the support that is there for you today at this beach. Nothing can affect you. Nothing can disturb you. No matter what occurs in the outside world, you are safe and supported here. This beach is a peaceful and comfortable place.

As you relax even more, begin to feel the warmth and comfort of the sun touching the skin of the body. It's just the right amount of warmth and there may be a cool breeze on parts of your body that need it some coolness today. Feel the warmth of the sun and the sand making contact with the rest of your body. The warmth from the pleasant sunshine begins to fill the center of your body with a very pleasant healing glow. You can begin to notice this place of comfort, of warmth of safety in the center of the body.

And you can begin to feel the safe and warmth begin to spread. It is a pleasant sensation and you can imagine this warmth spreading out from the core of your body almost like rays of the sun. Spreading out throughout the torso now; warm, comfortable soothing sensations. Almost like this comfort and warmth is spreading; spreading out throughout the torso, throughout the abdomen, throughout the chest, throughout the lower, middle and upper back. Spreading up the length of the spine, up into the neck and head and down the length of the spine to the tailbone. And you can even notice this warm comfortable sensation spreading, down the legs now all the way down the legs into the feet, and you can even notice the spreading up over the shoulders and down, down the hands. You might even be surprised to notice that your hands are getting warmer and warmer. Your hands are getting warmer and warmer, almost as if you are warming your hands by the sunlight, feeling the heat from the sun going straight in the tips of the fingers or almost like you are holding a warm cup of coffee or tea or a warm bowl of soup. You can imagine the heat entering in to the tips of the fingers while this warm, healing soothing sensation traveling down the arms in to the fingers. No need to try; just allow this warmth in this your hands as you may say to yourself silently in your mind. My hands are getting warmer and warmer. Easy pleasant sensations. My hands are getting warmer and warmer. Feeling the heat from the sun. Feeling the warmth of the core spreading down. My hands are getting warmer and warmer. Just take a notice to enjoy this state or relaxation that you have created for yourself, feeling your whole body at ease, feeling very, very relaxed. Just resting here.

And in a moment we will begin to travel back, back away from this beautiful, safe, comfortable beach. And you can imagine yourself in your mind's eye leaving that beach and beginning to walk to the path and leaving it, knowing that you can return to this place whenever you like, that it is always there for you to come back to. You may begin to feel yourself traveling back; to a state of wakefulness. Count slowly from A to E and as you travel back to a state of wakefulness keep with you any aspect of this relaxation that was useful for you today.

A - Beginning to travel back up, up to a state of wakefulness.

B - Becoming more alert and aware, wiggling fingers and toes.

C - Becoming more aware feeling more calm and centered. Coming back even more fully.

D - Traveling back completely, stretching a little bit.

And E – you can come back completely and open up your eyes feeling refreshed and alert.

Script written by Shilagh Mirgain, PhD, for UW Cultivating Well-Being: A Neuroscientific Approach