Mental imagery exercise

The purpose of this relaxation exercise is to help you identify areas of the body where you experience, for example, tension, and to use relaxing mental images to release that tension.

If you do not find such areas in your body or if you find it difficult to identify them, that is not a problem. You can still do the exercise simply for relaxation.

If you wish, you can listen to the exercise once all the way through first. Before beginning, consider the following:

Sit in a calm place and close your eyes. Bring to mind a situation, either imagined or real, in which you feel comfortable and relaxed. Focus on this state and notice what your body feels like in that moment.

If this good and pleasant feeling had a color, what color would it be? Fix this color in your mind as a relaxing and calming color. Now we will begin the exercise.

Take a comfortable position, for example sitting on a chair or on the floor, or lying on a bed—whatever feels best for you. Close your eyes and take a few calm breaths.

Focus on listening to your body. Where do you feel tension, pain, or other discomfort? Choose one area of your body and describe its sensations to yourself. For example: "What color would describe this part of the body?"

Choose a tense area of your body and focus your attention on it. Now imagine the color representing the good feeling you thought of at the beginning slowly spreading to this area.

Imagine the relaxing color covering the qualities of discomfort and the color representing tension. Give this its own time. Feel the color spreading and the relaxation progressing along with it. Notice how, as the color spreads, the area begins to feel as relaxed as in the situation you imagined before the exercise.

Feel the relaxation. What does relaxation feel like? If you wish, you can extend the spreading of the color to your entire body. Focus on the relaxation and open your eyes.

The exercise is now complete.

In the future, you can also think of this same color spreading and relaxing your mind and body, for example in uncomfortable situations.