



Stress Management: Relaxation Technique— Mental Relaxation Space

There are different types of Guided Imagination techniques. Sometimes, all these techniques are lumped together and called “visualization”. But the term **visualization** can sometimes cause people to feel stress! Instead, think of this relaxation technique as a way to create a mental “relaxation space”.

Guided Imagination/Visualization = “Mental Relaxation Space”

Relaxation Space

- Can be used for general relaxation
- Is often used as preparation for doing additional relaxation techniques.
- Is kind of like daydreaming
- Some studies have shown that this technique can reduce pain as well as stress.

You might use “Relaxation Space”:

- If you’ve had a really tough day and need to unwind.
- Before you go to sleep.
- To prepare yourself to do another relaxation technique, like Progressive Muscle Relaxation or Creative Imagining.

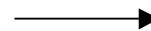
Sample “Relaxation Space” Script: this is an example only. Change it however you want!

Before you begin:

1. Choose a safe, relaxing scene to imagine. When you do this technique with your child, don’t assume that what’s safe and relaxing for you is the same for your child. Ask them! Examples:
 - In a park
 - In the forest
 - By a lake
 - In your bedroom
 - At the ocean
 - Anywhere that feels safe and relaxing to you.
2. Lie down, or sit somewhere where you can be quiet and undisturbed.
3. Your eyes should be closed for this, so don’t do it while driving!

Script # 1: Say aloud to your child, or to yourself:

- Imagine that you are in [the most relaxed place you can think of!].
- Let’s use our senses:
 - What does the place look like? How does it feel?
 - Are there any sounds? What are they? Listen...
 - Are there any smells? What are they





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- Stay in your “relaxation space” as long as you want. Continue to explore in your imagination. Take a few deep breaths. Think of this as a mini-vacation.
- Open your eyes whenever you are ready to be done.
- You can visit this “relaxation space” whenever you need to unwind and de-stress.

Script #2: You can be more directive, and guide the experience. This can be helpful the first few times, until your child has “created” a relaxation space. You can say:

- Imagine you are in a forest. Notice all the fir trees. There are tall trees all around—take a deep breath, and smell the pine scent!
- On the ground beneath your feet is a carpet of pine needles. The ground is dry, but soft from a recent rain. Bend down and feel the pine needles.
- Walk along the forest. There is a path just for you! Do you hear the birds singing in the trees? Look—there is a bluebird over there in that tree.
- The temperature is perfect for you. Do you feel sunshine on your skin? Or is the weather cool and misty?
- As you walk along, you see a lake beyond the trees. Walk over to the lake. Hear the water lapping against the shore. Sit down by the side of the lake on the sandy beach. Take off your shoes and socks and feel the sand between your toes.
- Stay in your relaxation space as long as you like. When you are done, open your eyes. You can come back and visit any time you need to be alone and relax.

As with any relaxation technique, do not attempt to teach this to your child during an episode of stress. Doing this could make things worse! Teach and practice relaxation techniques when you can both be calm and quiet together.

For more tips, or if you need more information or would like to talk to someone:

In Washington State: Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE

Outside of Washington State: contact your local Circle of Parents agency at

www.circleofparents.org