

Mountain Hike Guided Imagery

Now we are going to do a relaxation exercise called a guided imagery. You are going to take an imaginary hike through a forest. Let yourself get comfortable. Find a comfortable place to sit or lay and let your body relax.

Take notice of your body. If there is anything that is tense, bring your attention there. Allow that tension to slowly melt away with each breath. Breathe in . . . breathe out . . . breathe in . . . breathe out. Let's take three more breaths together, breathing in the warmth and relaxation and breathe out any tension or stress you feel. In . . . out . . . in . . . out . . . in . . . out.

It is a warm, summer afternoon. You are on a walk by yourself, and you decide to hike through a forest. This can be a place you have been before, or you can imagine a beautiful place in nature. The path goes up a mountain and is surrounded by tall, lush trees. The path smells earthy, you smell the pine needles and feel the fresh mountain breeze on your face. You can hear the distant sound of buzzing bees, and the birds are chirping all around you. The breeze blows through the mountain valley, and you hear the whisper of wind in the trees.

As you walk, you are shaded from the summer sun beneath the trees. You feel the coolness of the damp earth on your skin, rising up from the ground. You come out of the shade into the sun, and feel the warmth of the afternoon sun glowing on your skin. It warms you.

In the distance, you can see the sky. The clearest blue you have ever seen with wispy white clouds speckling the view. You are surrounded by the peaceful tranquility of the forest. You continue to walk, listening to the chirping of the birds and the fluttering of the butterflies. You come across a big rock, a smooth rock being warmed in the sun. The perfect place to sit. You decide to take a seat on the rock. You lay down and feel the warmth of the sunny rock on your back. If you move over, you can feel the coolness of the other side of the rock in the shade.

You close your eyes and let yourself feel the breeze on your face . . . the sun on your skin. You feel tranquil . . . at peace. Everything is calm.

As you lay on the rock, you lose track of time. The sun is now setting over the horizon. You notice the sky turning beautiful shades of red . . . pink . . . yellow . . . orange . . . while the sun sets down into the horizon. Your skin feels warm, and the air around you begins to cool. You hear an owl in the distance, it is almost night. You feel relaxed . . . and peaceful . . . as you watch the sun continue to set.

(Pause for a few seconds)

Notice how you feel right now. The sensations of in your body, the relaxation of your mind. When you are ready, begin to bring your body and mind back to the present. You can wiggle your fingers . . . your toes . . . and slowly open your eyes. Return your awareness to where you are right now.

Remember, as you return to your activities today, that you can always return to this place in your mind when you want to relax.

Sample questions to debrief:

- How do you feel after doing this activity?
- How did your body feel before? After?
- What were your expectations about this activity? Did it turn out how you expected?
- Was this easy for you? Difficult for you?