

Guided Imagery: The Forest

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To begin the visualization, sit or lie down in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Take several slow, deep abdominal breaths. As you begin relaxing you may be aware of a variety of physical sensations or thoughts. Scan your body for any muscle tension. If you become aware of any tension, tense the muscles for a couple of seconds and relax them. Acknowledge any thoughts without trying to get rid of them. You may imagine thoughts or concerns as puffs of smoke that rise into the air and eventually disappear.

Now imagine that you are walking down a path into a lush forest. As you walk along the path you completely take in the sights, sounds, smells, and feel of the place. All around you are trees, grasses, ground cover, and fragrant flowers. You hear the soothing sounds of birds chirping and the wind as it gently blows through the treetops. You smell the rich dampness of the forest floor, the smells of rotting vegetation and new growth. Through gaps in the treetops you see the sun high in a cloudless, blue sky. The sun is dispersed through the canopy of the treetops and filters down onto the forest floor, creating intricate patterns of light and shadow. With each breath you take in this place you feel a deep sense of peace and relaxation.

You soon come to a clearing. There are several flat rocks in the clearing surrounded by soft moss. A small stream runs among the rocks. You lie back on one of the rocks or on the cushiony moss and put your feet into the cool water. You feel the warm sun and a gentle, light breeze through your hair and across your skin. The sparkling clear water rushes around the multicolored rocks, making little whirlpools and eddies. You put your hand into the water and lift a handful to your lips. The water is cool and refreshing. You close your eyes listen to the water trickling through the rock. You bath in the warm sun and feel as though you are floating... relaxing deeper and deeper.

You let yourself sink further into relaxation, while continuing to be aware of the sights, smells, sounds, and feel of the forest around you. You allow yourself to let go of any concerns or worries and to feel completely refreshed and rejuvenated in this place.

When you are ready, imagine that you slowly get up and leave the clearing. As you walk back down the path through the forest, fully take in this place and realize that you may return whenever you wish by the same path. Each time you enter this place you will feel relaxed and at peace.