

If you experience anxiety or stress, you may have heard someone recommend relaxation techniques. There are many types of relaxation techniques that are used to help with anxiety and stress. Everyone is different, and not all relaxation techniques will work for everyone.

This resource provides information about one technique, Imagery.

## OVERVIEW

Anxiety and stress can cause a person to think negatively and imagine the worst happening. Imagery can help them focus on positive and pleasant memories and experiences, and help combat negative thoughts. Focusing on these types of mental images can help the person feel relaxed.

## STEPS

- Be relaxed in a quiet, comfortable place with eyes closed.
- Think of a calming place in your mind. Don't just think of the place briefly, but imagine every detail about it. Go through each of the senses – sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell – and imagine what someone would experience in that place.
- Here's an example using a beach:



- **Sight** – sun in the sky, sand under your feet, crystal clear water, calm waves rolling in
- **Sound** – rustling waves, seagulls in the sky, wind blowing
- **Touch** – sand or water under feet, warm sun on skin, wind on skin
- **Taste** – saltwater in your mouth, cool glass of lemonade
- **Smell** – ocean air and salt water, sunscreen

- Imagine this scene for as long as possible or at least until anxiety begins to lower. If negative thoughts or images try to pop up, return thoughts to the calming place and try to stay focused on the relaxing image.