Explorations in mindfulness

autogenic relaxation

# Autogenic Relaxation

By Danielle Palli (11 minutes)

For this meditation we are going to work on autogenic training. The purpose behind this type of meditation is to call to mind different words or phrases with the idea that by doing so you can encourage your body to relax. Words such as “warmth” and “heaviness” tend to be associated with falling asleep. This can be an effective tool if you are trying to fall asleep. It can also be effective if you are having a stressful day and you need to leave the room for a few minutes and use a progressive relaxation to relax your muscles and then go back to work less stressed. I

am excited to invite you to participate with me in Living It, a campaign powered by Masterpiece.

The Process:

1. I invite you to get comfortable, preferably lying down, but you can also be relaxed in a chair. For this technique today, I would like you to pick one of two scenes. You can create these scenes anyway that makes sense for you. You can either be lying on a beach on a warm day, you might even bury your legs in the sand just to feel the weight of the sand on your legs … or you might choose to be in a cottage in the woods, lying on a comfortable recliner with a warm blanket over you in front of a fireplace.

2. Take a moment to close your eyes and call those scenes to mind in as much detail as you can ... Don't worry if you are having trouble bringing those details to mind, just do the best you can … imagining yourself in one of these locations. Now with your eyes closed, gently notice your breath as you breathe in and out, not controlling it in any way … Keeping your breath soft and relaxed … Now I would like you to either repeat these phrases, or elements of these phrases, in your head after me, or simply pretend that my words are your words.

3. Let's begin. Draw your awareness into your right hand. Your right hand is warm and heavy. So, you might say *My right hand is warm and heavy ..*. Draw your awareness up to your right arm … *My right arm is warm and heavy ..*.So … *My right hand and my right arm are feeling very warm and heavy*. And drawing an awareness into the left arm ... *My left arm is warm and heavy …* *My left arm is warm and heavy* … Floating that energy down to your left hand ... *My left hand is warm ..*. *My left hand is warm and heavy …* Taking a moment to notice your arms and your hands with each exhale, allowing them to feel warm and heavy ...

4. Drawing your awareness into your left leg ... *My left leg is warm and heavy*… *My left leg is warm and heavy …* *My left foot is warm and heavy ..*. *My left foot is warm and heavy ..*. Drawing your awareness to your right foot … *My right foot is warm and heavy ..*. *My right foot is warm and heavy ...* And bringing that energy into the right leg … *My right leg is warm and heavy ... My right leg is warm and heavy ..*.

5. Take a moment to allow your arms and legs to feel warm and heavy … If you were on the beach, you might notice your legs buried in the sand and feeling the weight of the sand on your legs. Or if you are in a cabin in the woods, feel the weight of that blanket around your waist and on your legs.

6. Now drawing your awareness into your face and head and this time saying … *My face and head are cool and soft …* *My face and head feel cool and soft ..*.

7. Moving down to your neck and jaw ... *My neck and jaw feel cool and soft* … *My neck and jaw feel cool* and soft ...

8. Bringing your awareness down into your lungs, noticing your breath, noticing the inhalation and the exhalation … *My lungs and my breathing are smooth and relaxed* … *My lungs and my breathing are smooth and relaxed* …

9. Drawing your awareness to your heart … *My heart and my heartbeats are strong and normal* … *My heart and my heartbeats are strong and normal ..*.

10. Now drawing your awareness into your back and your shoulders, allowing them to feel weighted and supported by the ground … *My back and shoulders are warm and heavy ..*. *My back and shoulders are warm and heavy ..*.

11. Then moving down to the abdomen and hips, perhaps, including your low back if you would like …*My abdomen and hips feel warm and heavy … My abdomen and hips feel warm and heavy ...*

12. Take a moment to scan the entire body ... Imagining that it is heavy and completely supported by the ground or the chair beneath you. With each exhale, relaxing a little deeper … feeling a little more of that warmth and heaviness as you relax into the ground ...

13. And now relax your mind, relax your breath … Staying here for a moment … perhaps noticing the inhalation or exhalation, or simply enjoying a moment of silence .... When you are ready, go ahead and bring yourself back into the room. And when you are ready, you can open your eyes.