

Pain Management Guided Imagery Script

Written for pain clinics and therapists running imagery alongside a client's existing care. Twelve minutes that never ask anyone to imagine the pain away — the sensation is given a shape, a colour, a temperature and a texture, and then only one property at a time is altered, with everything else left exactly as it was found.

12 min · 6 segments

01. Setting the terms

1 min 30

[Read the second block close to word for word — the promise that the sensation is allowed to stay is what makes everything after it safe to run. This is a coping practice to sit alongside existing care, never a substitute for assessment; new, changing or unexplained pain belongs with a clinician, not a recording.]

Settle into a position that suits you today. If sitting is easier than lying down, sit. If you need to shift position part-way through, shift. You do not have to stay still for this. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

Before we start, one thing worth being clear about. We are not going to try to make the sensation disappear, and I will not ask you to pretend it is not there. It is allowed to stay exactly as it is for the whole of this recording. What we are going to do is look at it a little differently. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

Let your eyes close if that is comfortable, or let your gaze rest low and still. Take a couple of unhurried breaths. Nothing special — just a little slower than usual. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

02. Finding where it is

2 min

[Some clients locate the sensation instantly, others take most of the segment. Leave the long pauses intact either way. For widespread pain, say the line about picking one area firmly — surveying everything at once tends to escalate rather than settle.]

Let your attention travel through your body, without hurrying, and without needing to fix anything on the way. Start at your feet and move upwards. Ankles, knees, hips, back, shoulders, neck, jaw. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

Now find the place that is asking for the most attention today. If there are several, choose one. It does not have to be the worst one — choose the one you are willing to sit beside for a few minutes. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

Notice where it begins and where it ends. Does it have an edge you can find, or does it fade out? Is it near the surface, or further in? *[pause for 30 seconds]*

03. Giving it a shape

2 min 30

[Offer the categories, then get out of the way. If a client says nothing comes, tell them to guess — a guessed answer works exactly as well as a felt one, and saying so out loud takes the pressure off.]

If this sensation had a shape, what shape would it be? A band, a knot, a broad flat area, a narrow line. Do not think too hard about it. Take the first answer that turns up.

[pause for 30 seconds]

And if it had a colour, what colour would that be? Some people get a colour straight away. Some have to guess, and a guess is completely fine. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

Now temperature. Is it warm, hot, cool, cold, or does it have no temperature at all? And texture — rough or smooth, tight or loose, heavy, sharp, dull. *[pause for 35 seconds]*

Hold the whole picture for a moment. A shape, a colour, a temperature and a texture, sitting in that particular place. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

04. Changing one thing

2 min 30

[One property only. If a client starts rearranging everything at once the exercise loses its point — steer them back to a single change. Nothing here promises the sensation will alter, and you should not add that.]

Now choose one property, and only one. The colour, or the temperature, or the edges. Everything else stays exactly as you found it. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

See whether you can move that one property by a single step. If you chose colour, let it shift one shade — a deep red towards a duller red, not red to blue. If you chose temperature, a degree cooler, or a degree warmer, whichever sounds better to you. If you chose the edges, let them blur very slightly. *[pause for 40 seconds]*

It may move. It may not. If it will not move, that is information rather than failure, and you can leave it alone — it is allowed to stay as it is. If it did move, notice whether it stays there, or drifts back to where it started. *[pause for 40 seconds]*

05. The rest of the body

2 min

[This widening step puts the sensation back into proportion rather than out of mind, and it is the part most versions leave out. Do not let it get compressed into the closing segment.]

Let the picture sit where it is, and widen your attention outwards from it. Notice the parts of your body immediately around that area. Then further out — your hands, your feet, the back of your head. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

Find somewhere that feels neutral, or comfortable, or simply quiet. It might be the weight of your heels on the floor, or the warmth of one palm. Rest your attention there for a while. *[pause for 40 seconds]*

Both things are true at the same time. There is a place that is asking for attention, and there is a great deal of you that is busy doing something else entirely. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

06. Coming back

1 min 30

[Land it, then ask afterwards what shape and colour they got. The exact words a client uses here are worth writing down and handing back to them in the next session.]

We are going to finish now. You can let the image go, or keep hold of it if it is useful. It is yours either way. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

Bring your attention back to the room. Feel the chair or the bed underneath you. Move your fingers, and your feet, at whatever pace is comfortable today. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

And when you are ready, open your eyes. Nothing has been taken from you here. You have spent twelve minutes looking carefully at something that usually gets looked away from, and that is a thing you can do again whenever you choose to.

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