

Copy for GI and Parkinson's Disease (abridged from web md, Pub med etc)

Guided imagery is a proven form of focused relaxation that helps create harmony between the mind and body. Guided imagery coaches you in creating calm, peaceful images in your mind -- a "mental escape" for people with Parkinson's disease.

How Can Guided Imagery Help Parkinson's Disease?

Guided imagery, which can aid any treatment or procedure, provides a powerful psychological strategy that enhances a person's coping skills of patients with Parkinson's disease. Many people dealing with stress feel loss of control, fear, panic, anxiety, helplessness, and uncertainty. Research has shown that guided imagery can dramatically counteract these effects. It can help people overcome stress, anger, pain, depression, insomnia, and other problems often associated with illnesses and medical/surgical procedures. It is clear that stress and depression can worsen the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. By using guided imagery, you can stay calm.

this technique and process should not be considered a cure for PD. "But," says Ruth Hagesteun, RN, MA, director of Field Services for the National Parkinson Foundation, "focusing through guided imagery can be a helpful way to deal with many symptoms, as can other types of meditation, journaling and yoga. Stress management is incredibly important for people with Parkinson's," she adds. "And it's also vital for caregivers. Living with Parkinson's every day is not easy, and techniques for reducing stress for patients and caregivers, even for a short period of time, are very valuable."

In addition to reducing stress and depression, guided imagery can:

- Dramatically decrease pain and the need for pain medication
- Decrease side effects and complications of medical procedures
- Reduce recovery time and shorten hospital stays
- Enhance sleep
- Strengthen the immune system and enhance the ability to heal
- Increase self-confidence and self-control

***Recent studies have demonstrated that Guided Imagery can also reduce tremors, muscle stiffness, weakness, fatigue and difficulties with moving and balance plague many people with Parkinson's Disease. (SEE BELOW)

Parkinson's disease tremor is diminished with relaxation guided imagery. Schlesinger I, Benyakov O, Erikh I, Suraiya S, Schiller Y.

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Abstract

Patients with Parkinson's disease (PD) may have pronounced tremor that exacerbates during stress. To determine whether PD tremor improves with relaxation guided imagery (RGI) and relaxing music. Twenty patients with PD with moderate to severe tremor participated in sessions where relaxation techniques were implemented. Tremor was objectively monitored using an accelerometer. RGI dramatically decreased tremor in all 20 patients (baseline 270.38 +/- 85.82 vs. RGI 35.57 +/- 43.90 movements per minute $P < 0.0001$). In 15 patients, RGI completely abolished tremor for 1-13 min. Average tremor activity remained significantly below baseline both 15 min and 30 min after RGI was discontinued ($P < 0.001$). Patients reported improvement lasting 2-14 hours (mean 6.8 +/- 3.8). Relaxing music significantly reduced tremor but to a lesser degree than RGI (220.04 +/- 106.53 movements per minute $P = 0.01$). Self-relaxation had no significant effect on tremor. RGI can supplement conventional medical treatments for tremor in patients with PD on best medical treatment.

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Guided imagery is not an alternative to medical or surgical treatment for Parkinson's disease, nor is it a cure. Rather, it is an inexpensive, yet powerful way in which you can actively participate in your health care.