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Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue

Welcome to this Healthy Living To Go podcast from Kaiser Permanente, designed to fit the way you live and the way you learn. Listen, live well, and thrive.

I'm Belleruth Naparstek, and this is guided imagery designed to help you rest, renew and heal.

Guided imagery is gentle but powerful, and it can reach places inside of you that conscious thinking sometimes can't. It's been shown to help reduce anxiety, depression, pain and fatigue; improve self esteem and energy; enhance circulation and stabilize blood pressure; and speed up healing while helping mind and body relax.

For all these reasons, it's a wonderful tool for fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue. For that matter, so is adequate sleep, gentle stretching, light aerobic exercise, progressive relaxation, conscious breathing, massage therapy, yoga and qigong. You may eventually want to try several of these practices to find the combination that works best for you.

Try to listen to this once or twice a day for several weeks. You'll find that over time it will have a stronger and stronger effect. Different parts of this will probably capture your attention at different times. Always feel free to ignore or change whatever doesn't suit you. Your unconscious mind will probably do that for you anyway.

You don't need to pay perfect attention for this to work. In fact, your mind will probably drift in and out naturally. You may even fall asleep while listening, and it will still have an effect, especially with repeated listening. If you notice your mind wandering, you can gently guide it back.

And because this imagery is designed to help you relax, it's best not to play it while driving. But you can listen to the affirmations any time. And don't worry if it brings forth some unexpected emotion. That just means it's working for you in a deep way

If you position your hands the same way each time you listen, this will become a kind of conditioning cue. Later, you'll be able to use it to move very quickly into a place of deep relaxation.

So for now, see if you can take this next while, to commit yourself to this process of engaging the power of your imagination to help you heal... by gently immersing yourself in this safe and easy process... all you have to do is settle in, relax and let yourself listen...

To begin with, see if you can position yourself as comfortably as you can, shifting your weight so that your body is well aligned and supported.... and gently allowing your eyes to close...

And now, taking some nice, slow, deep, comfortable breaths... in and out... inhaling as fully as you comfortably can... and breathing out, as fully and completely as you can... feeling the soft expansion of your body with each in-breath... and the way your body subsides with each out-breath... slow and easy... relaxed and calm...

Aware that with each breath in... you are sending precious oxygen and rich nutrients to places in your body that need them ... and with each breath out... you're releasing toxins and flushing out waste

from your cells...

So you are breathing in And breathing out... aware of the healing action of the breath... its slow, strong and steady rhythm energizing and cleansing... nourishing and healing...

And with each inhale... imagining that you're sending the warm energy of your breath... to the places in your body that are tense or tired; achey or sore... and releasing discomfort with the outbreath...

So you can feel your breath going to all the tight, tense places... warming and loosening and softening them... and then, lifting up the tension... and breathing it out...

So that more and more, you can feel safe and comfortable... relaxed and easy... watching the steady, cleansing action of your breath...

And any unwelcome thoughts that come to mind... those too can be sent out with the breath... released with the exhale... so that for just a moment, your mind is empty... for just a split second, it is free and clear space.... and you are blessed with stillness...

And any emotions you might be feeling inside... those too can be noted and acknowledged and sent out with the breath... so that your emotional self can be still and quiet... like a lake with no ripples...

And turning your focus inward for a moment... to take a gentle inventory of your body... noticing where it hurts... and where it feels comfortable... so you're moving your awareness down into your body... with the same gentle, respectful interest... that you would show any weary friend who aches and hurts...

Noticing any sensations in your head... and breathing kindness and concern into your head... and releasing discomfort with the outbreath... so that your head can feel clearer... and moving your awareness into your neck and shoulders ... and sensing how they're feeling... breathing gentle, caring energy into them... and feeling them lighten and release as you exhale...

Noticing with gentle interest how it feels inside and all along your arms... in your elbows... your wrists and hands... and breathing the healing power of your breath into them... breathing out weariness and discomfort... loosening trapped energy with the power of your breath...

Moving your awareness into your chest... sensing any tightness or discomfort around your breastbone... or inside your lungs... and inhaling all around and through them... releasing with the exhale...

And taking an extra moment to focus on your heart... becoming aware of how it feels, all around and through your heart... and you can breathe the kindness of your breath... into your own heart...

So you're filling your heart with the kindness of the breath... letting its abundant energy spill over and radiate into your chest... and down your back... soothing and opening and loosening your spine... more and more noticing how the breath can make space in your body ... lightening and releasing... so energy can move more freely... and more and more healing can tiptoe into those spaces...

Filling your belly.... Respectful of any sensations in your abdomen... as you send the power of your breath deep into your belly... and as you breathe out... you might feel more energy and healing move through you... enlivening your cells as they take energy from the power of the breath...

And moving your awareness into your hips and bottom... aware of the soft power of the in-breath, chasing out discomfort... energizing any dulled, deadened spaces... and so, too, with the muscle of your

legs... your knees... your calves and ankles... your feet... all the way down to the tips of your toes... as the rich energy of the breath moves through you... releasing and opening as it goes...

So you're just taking a moment to check in with your body... your oldest friend... your steadiest companion... and acknowledging with kindness and respect... as you would to any friend who's been suffering... that you know it hasn't been easy... but it will get better...

Still aware of your breathing, in and out...slow and steady... more and more opening spaces inside your body... energizing and renewing you...

And more and more you can sense a lightness moving through you... a temporary respite from the pull of gravity... as you lift and float... joints and limbs gently held aloft... and softly settling into their proper alignment... returning to their peaceful spots... as you float at rest ... dynamically aligned.... Like a constellation of stars in the night sky...

Continuing to breathe, deeply and easily... as you float back down... to the welcoming embrace of the earth... more comfortable and easy...

Able to feel the bountiful energy of your surroundings tingle and vibrate all around and through you... creating a soft cushion of energy... a force field of protection and safety... softly pulsing around you... becoming more and more palpable... and inside this cushion of energy, you can feel safe and protected... able to take in whatever is nourishing to you... but insulated from whatever you don't want or need...

And now... sensing this cushion drawing to it all the love and sweetness that has ever been felt for you by anyone at any time... feeling it pull in all the caring, all the loving kindness that has ever been sent your way... every prayer and good wish... every smile, every nod of respect and gesture of gratitude... all of it, permeating and filling the field of energy around you...pulling it all in like a powerful magnet... calling every good wish home... and you can breathe all that goodness into you... letting it fill your heart and permeate your body ...

Sensing in the cushion the smiling presence of gifted helpers and healers... allies, teachers and guides... sweet spirits and magical beings... come to lend assistance... invoked by your intention to be strong and well ... and some of these visitors may be familiar... or maybe not... it doesn't matter... just so you feel them around you now...

Sensing healing hands... gentle and respectful.... but adept and skillful too... placed exactly where needed... massaging and loosening muscle and tissue... warming and easing the hurting places... and you can feel the toughened fibers in the muscle respond... gratefully melting back into their original pliable flexibility... as circulation increases... flowing through the softened fibers... flushing out any debris that might have collected there....cleansing and clearing... sending toxins on their way...

And feeling the healing touch of warm hands on your midriff... and the small of your back... soft waves of pulsing, healing energy infusing each and every organ... the liver, the spleen, the kidneys... each hardworking organ, gaining strength and power... so they can do their filtering work with even greater efficiency... capturing more and more residue.... and flushing it out...

All the while, feeling a peaceful calm and balance settle over your immune system... evening you out... filling you with quiet ... as your heart becomes more and more peaceful... steady and calm... and you might be surprised... at the balanced, steady way you can meet the world.. with supple, liquid strength...

and anything that might have jarred you in the past... is now modulated by the fluid, peaceful strength inside of you... and the cushion of energy around you... insulating and protecting you....

As more and more, you feel your mind getting clearer.. your body stronger... your heart fuller... your energy freer... propelled by each deep, powerful breath... in and out....

And you know that it is not just your body that is cleansing and clearing... but that you too are rinsing out the crusty debris of old guilt and self blame... flushing out harsh judgments against yourself... unfair expectations... old fears and worries... and washing them away ... no longer willing to push yourself beyond your strength... or take on the feelings of others... or shoulder burdens that belong elsewhere...

And instead, you can breathe, deeply and fully... and focus inward... and listen to the wisdom of your body... telling you when to rest... how to respect your needs... and pace your energy... and take gentle good care of yourself... as your strength and vitality return... and your heart remembers the song it sings...

And suddenly you are certain... you know with your whole heart, your whole being... that you are healing... that you will continue to heal.. that a time is coming when you'll be walking in one of your favorite places... glad to make contact with the steady support of the ground beneath you... aware of all the life and beauty around you... attuned to all the richness of the sights and smells and sounds of the place... of the delicious feel of the air on your skin... enjoying the easy, natural swing of your arms... the easy stride of your feet...

Grateful to feel the joy of energy and strength back inside of you... able to appreciate yourself, just as you are, right now, in this very moment... able to appreciate your body... your oldest friend, your steadiest companion... and perhaps beginning to comprehend its true beauty, its awesome intelligence, and its faithful service to you...

Knowing you are getting stronger... building muscle... gathering energy and power... clarity of mind... freedom of purpose...

You again become aware of the protective cushion of energy and the support around you... you might even see a nod, a smile, a gesture... maybe hear an approving murmur, an encouraging phrase... perhaps a touch on your shoulder...

And you know that they see it too... that you are healing... that you will continue to heal... and they are your witnesses ... your private cheering section... yours to call forth whenever you wish...

And so... feeling peaceful and easy... ... you can once again feel yourself in the center of your body... strong and peaceful and steady... feeling your body in the chair, your feet on the floor, your hands in your lap, your breath in your belly...

And so... very gently and with soft eyes... allowing yourself to come back into the room whenever you are ready.... knowing in a deep place that you are better for this...

And so you are....

AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations are positive statements designed for repeated listening, a sort of reprogramming of your unconscious mind to combat negative thinking. Over time, they can have a profound, cumulative effect. Some people find them easier to work with than guided imagery.

See if you can listen to each statement in a state of open, relaxed attention, breathing in deeply as you hear each one, and breathing out as you repeat it to yourself, either aloud or in your mind.

I know there are times I become frightened, discouraged, angry or sad, and I accept what I feel as my inner truth of the moment

I know that the more I can acknowledge and accept what I feel, the more I encourage my body to heal.

More and more, I can soften around my feelings and release them... breathing in to soften them, and breathing out to release them.

When I remember to feel my breath moving in and out of my body, slow and steady, I return to my own inner peace and calm.

More and more, I can allow myself to let go of worrying about things I cannot control, and focus on my own inner peacefulness.

More and more, I see that when I can accept myself, without criticism or blame, the more I encourage my body to heal.

I know that when I let go of harsh expectations and unrealistic demands, the more I allow my body to heal.

I am no longer willing to push myself beyond my strength, or take on the feelings of other, or shoulder burdens that are not mine to bear.

I am better able to acknowledge, with kindness and respect toward myself, that it has not been easy, but that it can and will get better.

I call upon my intention to heal myself, and be well.

I salute my willingness to do what it takes to heal myself and be well.

I welcome the heightened energy, focus and strength that my new commitment to myself is bringing me.

I thank my body for all it has done for me in the past and all it will do for me in the future.

I am learning to trust my body and to make good use of the information it gives me.

I affirm my intention to support and care for this body of mine, my faithful ally, in spite of its alleged imperfections

More and more, I am learning to be gentle and considerate toward myself.

More and more, I am learning to save my energy for what truly matters.

I know that when I pull back from over-committing my time and energy, I allow my body to heal.

I know that when I replace being perfect for being good enough, I allow my body to heal.

More and more I am learning to pace myself.

I welcome my ability to cushion myself from jarring events, modulating my responses from my new seat of settled, balanced calm.

I salute my own courage, strength, endurance and fortitude.

I welcome the return of my sense of my own worth and value.

I welcome my ability to listen to the wisdom of my body, telling me to rest, respect my needs, pace my energy and take gentle good care of myself.

More and more I can appreciate the inborn power of my body's beauty, intelligence, and ability to heal.

More and more I'm able to savor the gifts of the present.

I welcome my ability to appreciate the beauty of my own being.

More and more, I can take the time to touch a leaf, smell the morning air, and receive the caress of a soft breeze on my face.

I am remembering to enjoy the pleasant feel of my body as it moves, stretches, breathes, rests and settles in for sleep.

More and more, I can take pleasure in the simple joys of living.

I know that when I am fully engaged in the present, I'm allowing my body to heal.

I know that when I feel the joy of doing what comes from my heart, I allow my body to heal.

I welcome my new awareness of the peaceful power in my heart, the seat of my strength, and the home of my spirit.

I know that I am better and better able to listen to my body and sense what it needs.

I know that I'm more and more able to sense when I'm tired and give myself room to rest.

I'm better and better able to seek out environments that are nourishing to me, and avoid those that aren't.

More and more, I can understand that my body is my ally, my oldest friend and my steadiest companion.

I know that when I appreciate my body, respect it and take good care of it, I allow my body to heal. More and more, I can be true to myself, judge by my own standards, and listen to the voice of my heart. I welcome the return of my strength and vitality.

I am aware that with each breath in, I am sending precious oxygen and rich nutrients to the places that need them.

I am aware that with each breath out, I am releasing toxins and flushing out waste from my cells.

I salute the healing action of my own breath.

I can see and feel radiant sunlight, entering and warming my body, sending peaceful joy and sweet healing deep into my body.

I can see and feel a powerful blue-green wave of healing, washing through me from head to toe, clearing away any unwanted debris and taking it out with the tide

I can see and feel a soft, warm, pulsing blanket of comfort surrounding me, enveloping me with healing, and softly soaking its energy into me.

I can feel the powerful healing that is going on inside deep my body, reaching into every corner, every cell.

I know I am tapping into new strength as the healing goes deeper and deeper into my body.

I can see and feel toughened fibers in my muscle melting back to their original pliable flexibility and softness.

I can sense the circulation increasing inside and around my muscle and connective tissue.

I can see and feel the increased circulation, flowing through softened muscle tissue, flushing out toxins, cleansing and clearing.

I can see and feel healing hands sending warm, gentle waves of pulsing, healing energy into my liver, spleen and kidneys.

I can feel my vitality and energy return, filling the opening spaces of my healing body with strength and joy.

I can see and feel a peaceful, balanced calm settle into my immune system.

More and more, I get stronger, build muscle, gather energy & power, a clear mind and a joyful heart.

I can see myself more and more willing and able to move and stretch, more and more enjoying the feel of my body in smooth and easy motion.

The blueprint that I hold in my mind's eye is the picture of myself, vital, strong and healthy, doing what I love to do, without a thought.

I thank all the sure, capable, healing hands, seen and unseen, that are helping my body get strong and well.

I thank all the prayers and good wishes that have been sent my way, enveloping me in gentle protection and support.

I invite assistance from my friends and loved ones, past, present and future, to lend me their help and strength.

I see myself surrounded by their love and caring, and I feel it all over my body like a warm wave.

I sense the presence of allies all around me, offering encouragement and support, healing and guidance.

I know that I am nourished and sustained by all the love and beauty that has ever come into my life.

I can feel the love and care of friends and loved ones all around me, supporting my courage and lifting my spirits.

I know that I am surrounded and supported by invisible forces, blessing my dreams and reminding me of my strength.

I am grateful for my own resilient courage and stubborn strength. I salute the fortitude I have shown and will continue to show.

I know that I am healing and that I will continue to heal.

More and more, I can feel my mind getting clearer, my body stronger, my heart fuller and my energy freer.

I know I have things to do, purposes to accomplish, gifts to give, and I require a strong and healthy body for this.

More and more, I know that I am perfectly, utterly safe.

And so you are...