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Immune System Imagery

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 support the healthy functioning of your immune system.

Guided imagery is gentle but powerful. It's been shown to elevate mood and reduce stress; reduce pain and depression; and improve self-esteem and energy. And recent research shows it can help increase white blood counts and the presence of neutrophils, lymphocytes and natural killer cells.

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 will probably capture your attention at different times. Always feel free to change or ignore 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 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.

If you position your hands the same way each time you listen, this will become a kind of conditioning cue to activate a healing response, no matter where you are. Later you'll be able to use this hand positioning to activate the same heightened immune response that you get while listening to the imagery.

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 your body heighten its work, by gently immersing yourself in this safe and easy process. All you need 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 supported... and gently allowing your eyes to close...

Becoming aware of the rise of your body as you breathe in... and the way it settles back down as you breathe out... so you can become more and more attuned to the feel of your breath moving in and out of your body...

And now, taking a nice, deep, full, cleansing breath... and breathing out, fully and completely... and with the next breath in, imagining that you're sending the warm energy of your breath to any part of your body that's sore or tense or tight... and releasing the tension with the outbreath... so you can feel your breath going to all the tight, tense places... warming and loosening and softening them... and then, gathering up the tension... and breathing it out...

So that more and more, you can feel safe and comfortable... relaxed and easy... sensing the cleansing

action of your breath... arms and legs loose and comfortable... tension draining from fingers and toes...
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're blessed with stillness...

And any emotions you're 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 now, putting the flat palm of your hand over your breastbone.... a little below the base of your neck.... and your other hand on the center of your belly... also flat palm down

And sensing that a soft, healing warmth is coming out of your hands.... and softly entering your body.... gently penetrating into skin and muscle and bone layer by layer.... surrounding and soaking into the glands that house your immune cells... stimulating and revitalizing them the two-lobed thymus beneath your breastbone.... and the little clusters of Peyer's Patches in the belly.... and perhaps even feeling a ripple of fresh appreciation for the constant support and protection they provide.... for keeping you safe and strong and well...

And sensing the two lobes of the thymus plumping up, warm and pink and full.... like a fragrant peach, ripening in the warmth of the sun.... and so too with the tiny, grape-like clusters of the Peyer's Patches... soaking in strength and purpose.... tight, full, strong little sacs, bursting with vitality...

Feeling the thymus, somewhere beneath your hand, gearing up to send forth whatever armies of defending cells that are needed... to anywhere in the body... to eliminate any unwelcome presence... cells that are loyal and ready... thousands of miraculous little soldiers, highly trained, focused and intelligent utterly committed to your well being... knowing where to defend and where to let things be...

Sensing the movement of these remarkable, trustworthy little defender cells.... highly trained, discriminating and intelligent.... moving out from their dispatch centers... all through your body combing tissue and fluid for any unwelcome presence that might contribute to your discomfort.... bypassing the healthy cells... respecting your own territory... and seeking out the cells occupied by the virus invaders, that impose uninvited on the warm generosity of your body....

And knowing that this crack corps of highly trained fighter cells can immediately see where an uninvited virus has made itself a home.... by the telltale markings left on the outside of the cell... like muddy footprints at the entrance of a house...

Sensing the patrolling T-cells, sighting the marked cells... quickly surrounding them.... and destroying them with a deft thrust like a sword in the hands of a master fencer.... deftly perforating the membrane of the cell... and shutting it down....

And, knowing that these miraculous little T-cells can even clone themselves when necessary.... spreading out in multiples of themselves, and pursuing any infected cells that may try to proliferate... feeling the warmth of their efforts, as they multiply and spread, accosting each and every compromised cell... with commitment, focus and skill....

So just sensing the movement of these loyal defenders.... dispatched from the powerful little gland under your breastbone... and patrolling all through your body.... protective and loyal....

And aided by other special forces... ingenious little helper cells that survey the action and call in more troops as needed... and suppressor cells that can see when the last of the enemy is gone, and so, call the fighting to a halt... calming down any overzealous fighter cells with no enemy left to attack sending them home... with the sense of a job well done .

And sensing, too, all the varieties of other elite troops that protect the body... marshalled from their many locations... with specialties of their own... some trained to identify chaotic, mutant cancer cells that will occasionally start to form.... knowing to quickly surround them ... and penetrate them with special poisons.... deftly and easily.... before they can begin to make trouble so just taking a moment or two to sense the movement of these intelligent, intensely focused cells.... spring-loaded to mobilize at the merest beginnings of a threat...

And sensing too the brilliant transformation of other cells... cells designed to fight bacteria.... cells that wait in the spleen and lymph nodes, like bored recruits, until they are needed.... and then, exquisitely changing form producing perfectly programmed little missiles charged and sent through the blood, straight to their hapless target brilliant, versatile cells that can also clone themselves.... so they can overpower even large numbers of enemy targets.....and so restore the body's integrity and strength...

And sensing, too, the clean-up crew of feeding cells... the loyal, sturdy foot soldiers, that clean the debris off the battlefield... leaving the tissue fresh and clean and strong... fresh, clean space for healthy new cells to grow....

So just feeling gratitude for this exquisitely orchestrated system of protection.... for all the constant, automatic activity on your behalf... all through your body... day and night... a vigilant, effective, nonstop patrol... a noble and brave army of dedicated soldiers, utterly committed to your well being.... intelligent and discriminating... only attacking where necessary... and knowing when to leave well enough alone....

So just breathing in the wonder and gratitude for this every-day miracle... happening inside your own body.... every moment of every day... no less miraculous for its constancy.... and breathing out a thank you... (pause)...

And again, breathing in this sense of blessing for all this safety and protection (pause).... and breathing out your thanks, fully and easily... (pause)...

And so.... feeling peaceful and easy.... very gently and with soft eyes.... coming back into the room whenever you are ready... knowing 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 instill positive messages. 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.

More and more, I can feel peaceful and calm just from breathing deeply, in and out.

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

More and more, I can appreciate myself, and take time to care for myself.

I understand that my body is my faithful ally, my oldest friend and my steadiest companion.

I am grateful to my powerful immune system for protecting me and seeing to my well-being.

I call upon my intention to increase the effectiveness of my immune system, to better monitor and protect my body.

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

I understand that my body has the built-in capacity to repair and heal itself.

I thank the glands that house my immune cells as I sense their vitality and power.

I can feel my thymus gland warming to its task of dispatching loyal, protective soldier cells all through my body.

I can feel and sense the buzz of thousands of miraculous little cells, purposeful and discriminating, knowing exactly where to defend me and where to let things be.

I thank the loyal, ready fighter cells in my body for seeing to my well-being by eliminating any unwelcome presence.

More and more, I sense my defender cells seeking out any unwelcome invaders inside my body and dispatching them, quickly and easily....

I am awed by the crack corps of highly trained fighter cells within me, able to clone themselves to become exactly the right number needed to protect me.

I salute the commitment, focus and skill of my miraculous T-cells, multiplying, spreading out and accosting each and every compromised cell, eliminating any threat...

I thank the suppressor cells that know when to call the fighting to a halt, calming and settling my immune system down...

I sense the continual protection offered me by the specialized cells patrolling my body, removing viruses, cancer cells and bacteria...

I thank the clean-up crew of feeding cells that cleanse my tissue of any debris, leaving my tissue fresh and clean and strong...

I salute the cells in the spleen and lymph nodes that produce perfectly programmed missiles that target compromised cells, eliminating them quickly and easily...

I am grateful for my body's built-in capacity to maintain its own integrity and renew its strength...

I feel gratitude for this exquisitely orchestrated system of protection, working for me night and day, all through my body...

I can see and feel a warm, pulsing, glowing blanket of magical comfort surrounding me, enveloping me with protection and safety, and soaking its soothing energy into me.

I can see and feel radiant sunlight entering and warming my body, infusing health and strength and healing into every corner of my being.

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.

More and more, I can feel my body growing stronger and more energized.

More and more, I know that I am sending a message, loud and clear, to every cell in my body that it is time to sweep out the old and make room for the new.

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

I thank my body for its faithful service to me.

I return the favor by becoming better and better able to listen to my body and sense what it needs. 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 know that when I can appreciate my body, respect it and take good care of it, I have more energy, strength and focus.

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

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

And so you are.