Mountain Cabin Scene

Guided Imagery

Picture yourself in a cabin in the mountains. It is the middle of the winter at night. You can hear the soft, high howling of the wind outside.

You are sitting comfortably in front of a fire watching the flames. You feel the heat from the flames on the front of your body. Notice almost an itching sensation in your arms and legs, from the intensity of the heat.

Smell the smoke from the pine wood that is burning. Hear the loud crackling and hissing as the sap falls and hits the fire. See the shadows flickering on the walls around you. The only light is coming from the orange fire. The rest of the cabin is in deep, purple darkness.

See yourself getting up and walking to the window. It is covered with a lacy pattern of frost. As you put your warm fingertips on the hard, cold glass, feel their warmth melt some of the ice.

Look out the window. The night clears. Stars fill the sky. Tall evergreen trees cast purple shadows against the white snow. There is a bluish tinge to everything, even the snow.

You are going to open the window. It gives way as you press your hand against it. Take in a big, deep breath of crisp, pure, cool, clean, fresh mountain air. It feels so good to breathe, your entire chest collapses in deep relaxation. You reach to pick a pine needle from the tree outside and chew it. Your mouth puckers at the flavor.
You decide to go outside. You walk over to the door to get dressed. See yourself putting on a coat, gloves, boots and a muffler.

Feel the door open as you push against it. You take another deep breath of fresh mountain air, which feels so good. The moon is silver and full overhead, throwing bluish shadows everywhere. You go down the steps of the cabin and begin walking along a path, with tall trees on either side, loaded with snow.

Minutes pass. You stop and take off your glove. You push your hand into a snow bank, grabbing some snow in your fist and compressing it into a ball of ice in the palm of your hand. A numb sensation begins in the palm of your right hand. At first, it is just the size of a pinpoint, then a dime, then a quarter, with the numbness spreading like ripples on a pond.

When your hand feels completely numb, put it anywhere you feel pain. You can really do this, if you want. Let the numbness in your hand drain into your body. That area becomes numb. When all the numbness has drained from your hand, put your hand at your side again.

If you still have pain, put your hand back in the snow until it is numb. Place your hand on the area again. Let more numbness from your hand drain into it. When all the numbness has drained from your hand into the area that hurts, put your hand back at your side. Your pain is relieved.

Put your glove back on your hand. You turn around and start heading back to the cabin, retracing your footsteps in the snow. The minutes pass until you are back at the cabin. You see a slight flicker of light from the fire glowing through the windows. You walk up the steps of the cabin, open the door and go inside. It is warm and cozy.

Take off your winter clothes and walk over to the fireplace. Hold your hands out to the flames. Feel warmth slowly returning to them. Lie down on a comfortable couch or rug by the fire. Smell the smoke. Hear the crackling of the wood in the fire and the howling of the wind outside. Let the sights, sounds and smells get farther and farther away, as you drift into peaceful sleep.

**What do I use guided imagery for?**

Guided imagery can be used to relieve pain on any place that hurts. As you get better at imagining the numbness, you will find that you can recall and create it directly into any area of your body. Some people find that after doing this regularly for a few weeks their pain goes away for longer periods of time. For some, it may be gone permanently.

It has been effective against many different kinds of pain, including headaches, nausea, heartburn, back and leg pain. The more vivid your imagining, the better your results will be.

You can also use guided imagery for relaxation or to help you sleep, by leaving off the cold and numbness, and just focusing on the peaceful imagery of being in a quiet, relaxing place.
What do I do if it is not working?

If it is not working, relax. You will get it in time. Do not try. In fact, tell yourself that you do not care if the image seems real or not. Do not allow yourself to make it too important.

Often when you give up, completely let go of the end result and stop forcing anything or stop trying, it will happen. Imagery does take energy, focus and practice, but you cannot force it to happen. Do not anticipate. Without anticipation, there is no worry. Without worry, it will all happen.