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Sleep

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.

[Music]

I'm Belleruth Naparstek and this is guided imagery, designed to engage the power of your mind, body and spirit, to help you sleep. Guided imagery in music are gentle but powerful healing tools that have been shown to help reduce anxiety, depression and stress, and increase confidence and feelings of wellbeing. Imagery can reach places inside of you that conscious thinking sometimes can't. Try to listen to this in bed just as you're ready to fall asleep. Over time it will have a stronger and faster effect. After a while you may find that you only need to use it once in a while because you're falling asleep on a regular basis without it. Listen to it as much as you wish. Not only can this help you fall asleep, but we now have mounting evidence that it can help you with the quality of your sleep and your sense of wellbeing and restedness when you wake up. And even if you have trouble with the idea that this can help you sleep, you can simply tell yourself that you're using it to help you relax. It will do that, too. The music will continue for several minutes after the imagery ends. You don't need to pay perfection attention for this to work. In fact, it's much more likely that your mind will drift in and out. If you notice your mind wandering, especially if it seems to be returning to the kind of thinking that keeps you awake, you can very gently guide it back to the sound of my voice. That's all you need to do. Redirect your focus to the sound of my voice and the music. Try to arrange your body in the same comfortable position each time you listen. Over time this positioning will help you to more quickly relax, fall asleep, and return to sleep. So for now, see if you can take this next while to commit yourself to this process of inviting your imagination to come and help you sleep well. By gentle 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 take a moment to settle into your position in a way that your body feels comfortable and well supported. And gently allowing your eyelids to get heavy and to close. So you can become aware of the rise of your body as you breathe in, and the way it settles back down as you breathe out. Becoming more and more attuned to the feel of your breath moving in and out of your body. Breathing in as fully as you comfortably can. And breathing out completely and easily. And with the next in breath, imagining that your 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 exhale. So you can feel your breath going to all the tight, so you can feel your breath going to all the tight, tense places, warming and loosening and softening any discomfort and releasing it with the out breath. Breathing into any unwelcome thoughts and breathing them out with the exhale, so that for just a moment, the mind is empty. For just a split second, it is free and clear space and you are blessed with stillness. Breathing into any emotions that might be rocking around inside. And releasing them with the out breath. So with each exhale, you can feel more and more balanced and steady, quiet and calm. Like a lake with no ripples. And so, you can become more and more aware of the gentle, healing power of your own breath moving in and out.

Tending to your interior, as more and more, you can feel safe and comfortable. Relaxed and easy. Allowing your body to feel heavier and heavier. Letting the soft weight of your arms and legs and torso and head settle and sink into the steady support of the bed. As you continue to breathe deeply and easily. Welcoming the surrender of muscle and bone into the support beneath you. Always aware of your own peaceful breathing. Soft and steady, in and out. Letting the soft weight of your head find a welcoming place on your pillow, or the supporting surface, as tightness in your scalp drains away. As tension melts out of your forehead. And you might even feel your eyebrows gently relaxing, too. As your eyelids become soft, and heavy. Feeling the loosening all through your jaw. As tension melts around our mouth and ears. Leaving a softness in your face, as you continue to breathe deeply and easily. Your whole body, rising and falling with each full, gentle breath. Soft and steady. In and out. And now, breathing into your neck and shoulders and sensing the warm, soothing softness of the in breath, warming and loosening, and softening the tight places. And cleansing and clearing away the tension as you breathe out. And feeling the shift as powerful muscles release and soften. And breathing into your heart, allowing gentle power of the breath to move all around, and through your heart. And breathing out, fully and easily. Each breath taking you deeper and deeper into your own healing rhythm. Feeling the heaviness in your arms as they sink into the support beneath them, muscle tissue releasing and softening. Tension melting away in the wrists and hands. Your fingers curling gently in their own natural gesture of comfort, breathing into your abdomen, feeling the gentle rise as you breathe in. And the way it subsides as you breathe out. As the healing power of the breath moves into any uncomfortable places, opening, softening, loosening and releasing discomfort with the exhale. Feeling the heaviness in your legs as tension drains away, as they sink into the bed. Muscle tissue releasing and softening. Tightness melting in thighs and calves, ankles and feet. Your toes relaxed and comfortable. Feeling all through your body the comfortable sensation of softness, as every cell responds to the sweet permission to safely surrender into rest and renewal. As if loving guardians were treading on soft feet, protecting and caring, gently closing the curtains to muffle external sound and shut out harsh light. Creating a soft and quiet space, free of distraction. Trustworthy and gentle, and safe, as they smile at you with caring eyes and maybe touch your brow with a gentle hand, arranging the covers just so. With the greatest of care. And there may even be a special animal, loyal and loving, to nuzzle your hand. Resting its head by you. To see to your wellbeing. And some might seat themselves around you to guard and protect you in the soft, quiet space. Inviting in healing dreams and nourishing images. Invoking effortless solutions, conjuring the sweetest of memories to come calling, to tiptoe in and lightly caress you as you dream in the sacred space of sleep. And you can sense that the very presence of these allies has changed the air in the room. Creating a space of ease and safety and comfort. A space as inviting as a loving lap is to a child. Or a rocking child, as steady as a mother's heartbeat. As soft as kindness. And you know, somehow, that these guardians have filled the space with all the love and sweetness that has ever been felt for you by anyone at any time. That they have pulled in all the lovingkindness that has ever been sent your way. Every prayer and good wish. Every smile and affirming nod. Pulling it all around you. Like a powerful magnet. Calling every good wish home. And you know, that this is what permeates the air in the room. Transforming it into the safest, truest and most nourishing of places. So that every in breath is a blessing. And you know that you can rest here. That this is a road your body knows well. To strength and renewal, to healing and growth. To vision and knowing. Just by melting in this way. Into the steady rhythm of your breath. Into the welcoming place where your spirit lies. Safe and easy, comfortably at home. Deep inside your body. Surrounded by safety and protection. And you know in your heart, in the deepest part of you, that this rich and nourishing place is always waiting for you. Yours to visit whenever

you wish by closing the curtains and dimming the lights. And matching your breath as you sink into the support beneath you, surrounded by powerful guardians and loving allies. Surrounded by safety and blessing. And knowing in a deep place that you are better for this. And so, you are.

[Music]