

A serene forest scene with a wooden cabin and a stream. The cabin is made of logs and has a small porch. It is surrounded by tall trees with green and yellow leaves. A stream flows in the foreground, surrounded by fallen leaves and rocks. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

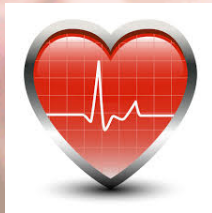
# *Guided Imagery:*

*A tool for practicing mindfulness*

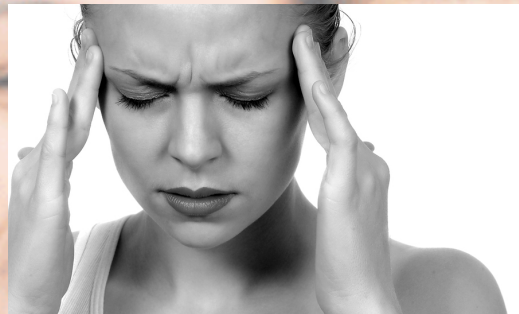
Mindfulness, simply put, means  
"being present in the now."

# How can it help you?

Just 10 minutes of visualization can reduce blood pressure.



It can relieve headaches and pain.



Visualization helps you engage in emotion, laughter, spirituality, and empathy.

# Popular Scenarios

Beach



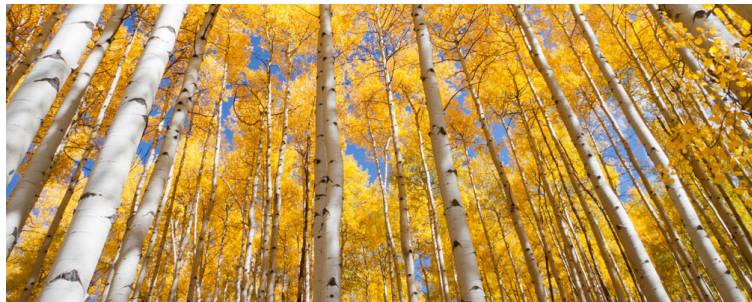
Mountains



Sunset



Favorite Place



# Follow These Easy Steps:

- Find a private calm space and make yourself comfortable.
- Take a few slow and deep breaths to center your attention and calm yourself. Close your eyes.
- Imagine yourself in a beautiful location, where everything is as you would ideally have it. Some people visualize a beach, a mountain, a forest, or a being in a favorite room sitting on a favorite chair. Imagine yourself becoming calm and relaxed.
- Focus on the different sensory attributes present in your scene so as to make it more vivid in your mind. For instance, if you are imagining the beach, spend some time vividly imagining the warmth of the sun on your skin, the smell of the ocean, seaweed and salt spray, and the sound of the waves, wind and seagulls. The more you can invoke your senses, the more vivid the entire image will become.
- Remain within your scene, touring its various sensory aspects for five to ten minutes or until you feel relaxed.
- While relaxed, assure yourself that you can return to this place whenever you want or need to relax.
- Open your eyes again and then rejoin your world.

# *Script. (It does not need to be this long)*

Start by finding a comfortable position. As you settle in, direct your attention to your body. Notice how your body feels in this moment. Let your body begin to relax by releasing the areas of tension, such as your shoulders.... feel the tension slipping away as you lower your shoulders slightly and let the muscles give up their hold.

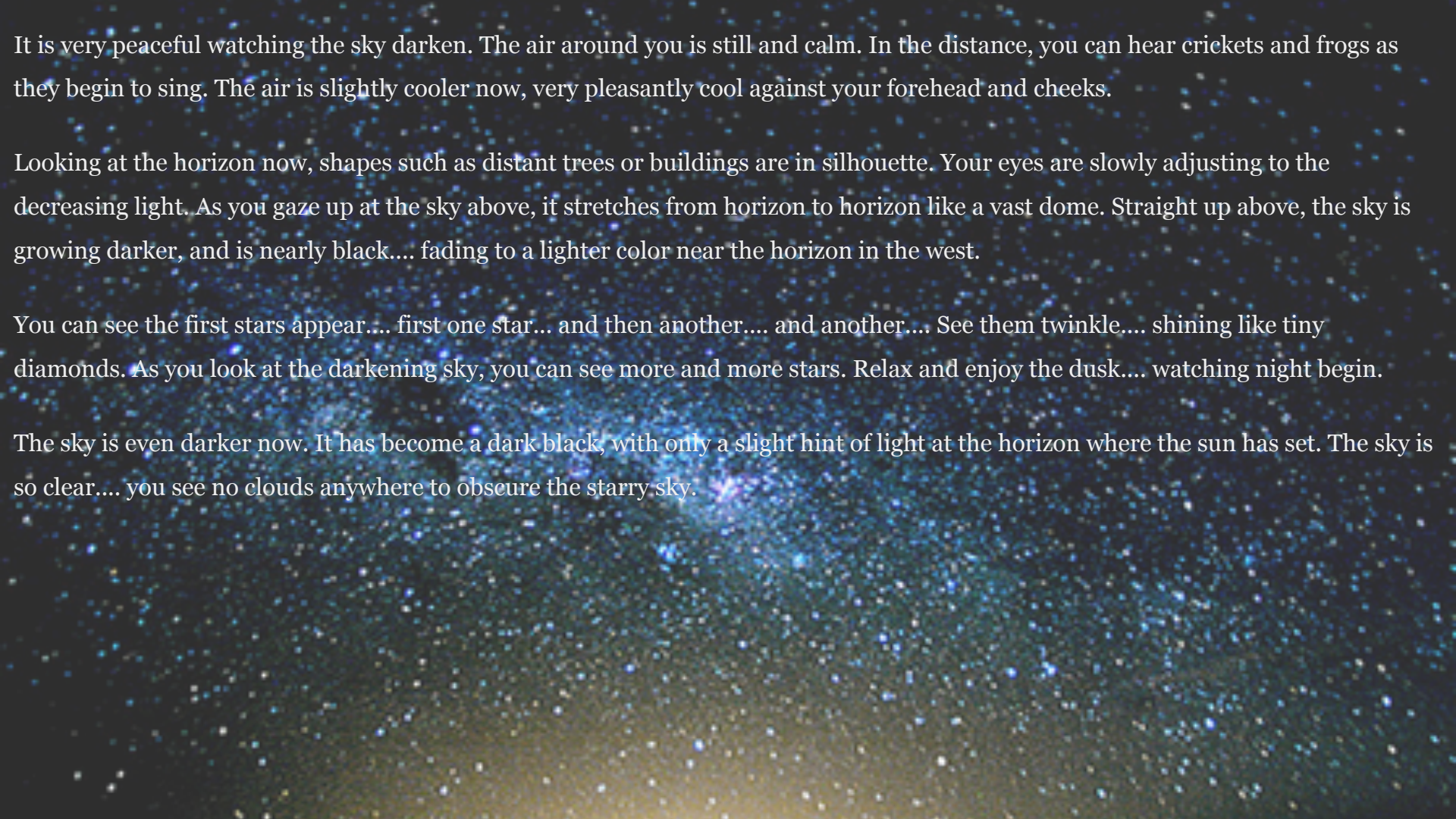
Take a deep breath in.... and as you exhale, let your body relax even more. Where is your body feeling the most tense? Focus your attention on this area as you take another breath in.... and feel this area relaxing as you breathe out. Breathe in.... and out..... In.... out.....

Where is your body the most relaxed? Notice how this area feels. Notice how the relaxation feels. See how you can let this relaxed feeling increase... growing.... relaxing.... feeling your whole body relax..... as if your muscles are melting.... softening.... relaxing.

As your body relaxes more and more, you can also relax your mind as you focus on the guided imagery to follow.

Imagine that you are outdoors at dusk. It is still light out, but the sun has set below the horizon. It is a pleasant temperature, comfortable..... and you are in a safe, peaceful place in the country. Maybe you are on a farm, or in the mountains, or in the open prairie.... picture a place that feels calm, safe, and serene.... a place you would enjoy watching the starry sky at night. Imagine the details of your surroundings. You are probably sitting in a chair, or lying on a blanket. Your position allows you to admire the sky above.

See the grass on the ground around you. You might see some trees, or rocks.... or even just wide open plains. Imagine this pleasant scene, and feel yourself relaxing, simply enjoying this solitude. The sky is becoming gradually darker. The highest part of the sky is a deep indigo color, becoming darker and darker as the moments pass. This color blends into a lighter shade, almost green.... At the horizon, the sky is an interesting shade of pink, mixed with gray in the fading light.

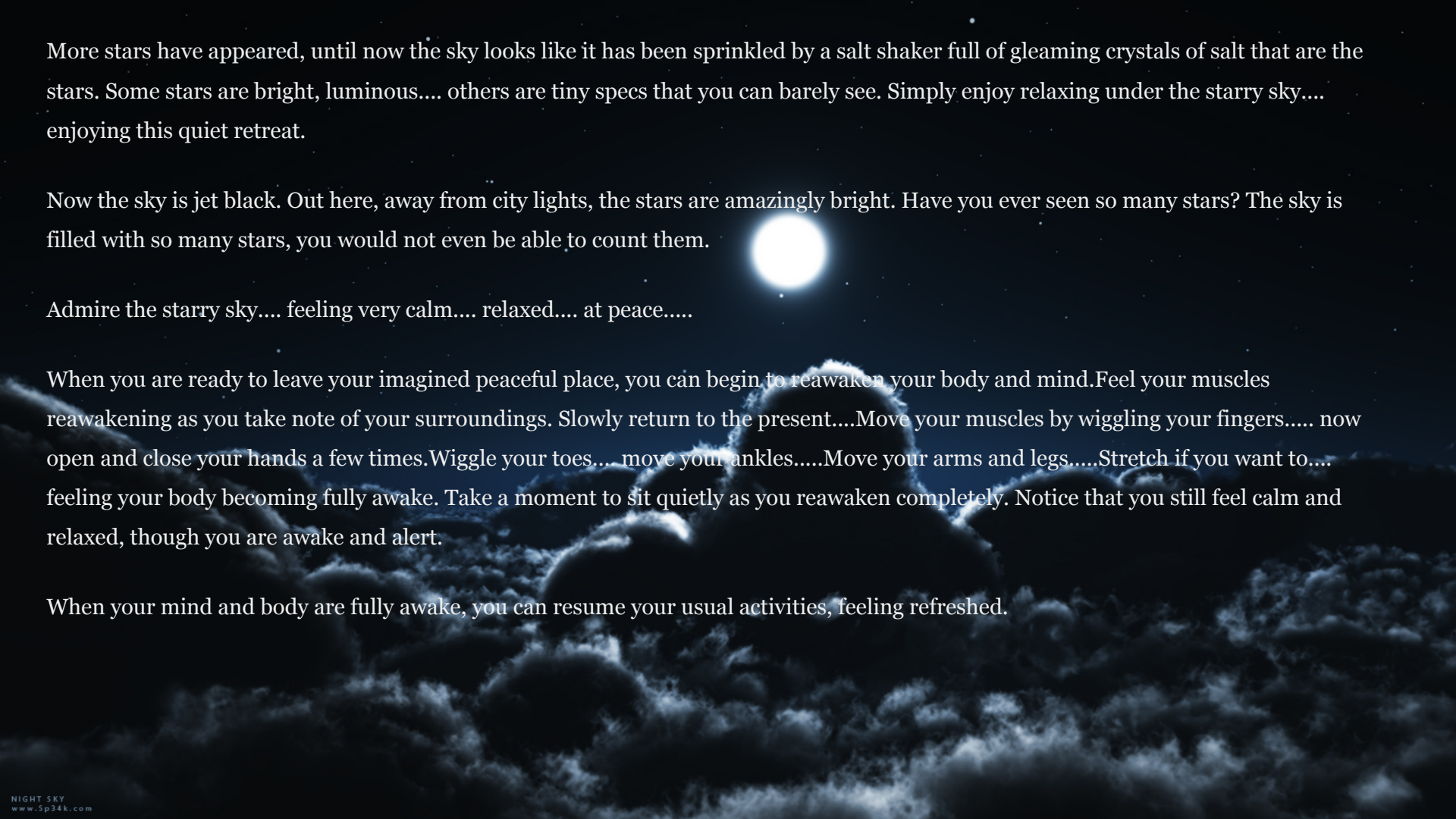


It is very peaceful watching the sky darken. The air around you is still and calm. In the distance, you can hear crickets and frogs as they begin to sing. The air is slightly cooler now, very pleasantly cool against your forehead and cheeks.

Looking at the horizon now, shapes such as distant trees or buildings are in silhouette. Your eyes are slowly adjusting to the decreasing light. As you gaze up at the sky above, it stretches from horizon to horizon like a vast dome. Straight up above, the sky is growing darker, and is nearly black.... fading to a lighter color near the horizon in the west.

You can see the first stars appear.... first one star... and then another.... and another.... See them twinkle.... shining like tiny diamonds. As you look at the darkening sky, you can see more and more stars. Relax and enjoy the dusk.... watching night begin.

The sky is even darker now. It has become a dark black, with only a slight hint of light at the horizon where the sun has set. The sky is so clear.... you see no clouds anywhere to obscure the starry sky.



More stars have appeared, until now the sky looks like it has been sprinkled by a salt shaker full of gleaming crystals of salt that are the stars. Some stars are bright, luminous.... others are tiny specs that you can barely see. Simply enjoy relaxing under the starry sky.... enjoying this quiet retreat.

Now the sky is jet black. Out here, away from city lights, the stars are amazingly bright. Have you ever seen so many stars? The sky is filled with so many stars, you would not even be able to count them.

Admire the starry sky.... feeling very calm.... relaxed.... at peace.....

When you are ready to leave your imagined peaceful place, you can begin to reawaken your body and mind. Feel your muscles reawakening as you take note of your surroundings. Slowly return to the present.... Move your muscles by wiggling your fingers..... now open and close your hands a few times. Wiggle your toes.... move your ankles..... Move your arms and legs..... Stretch if you want to.... feeling your body becoming fully awake. Take a moment to sit quietly as you reawaken completely. Notice that you still feel calm and relaxed, though you are awake and alert.

When your mind and body are fully awake, you can resume your usual activities, feeling refreshed.

# Sources

*Guided Imagery: Dynamics of Visualization and Imagery in Therapy*. Patricia Norris, PhD. [http://www.healthy.net/Health/Article/Dynamics\\_of\\_Visualization\\_and\\_Imagery\\_In\\_Therapy/392](http://www.healthy.net/Health/Article/Dynamics_of_Visualization_and_Imagery_In_Therapy/392).

*Visualization and Guided Imagery Techniques for Stress Reduction*. Harry Mills, Ph.D., Natalie Reiss, Ph.D. and Mark Dombeck, Ph.D. [http://www.sevencounties.org/poc/view\\_doc.php?type=doc&id=15672&cn=117](http://www.sevencounties.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=15672&cn=117)

Images: Google Images

<http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/ART00468/Guided-Imagery-Therapy-Dr-Weil.html>