

## Imagery for Cancer



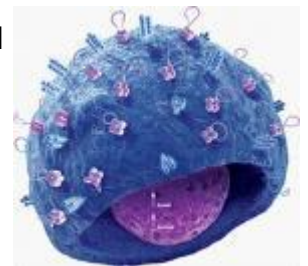
There appears to be some evidence of benefits of imagery in treating cancer, and/or the symptoms of cancer and its associated treatment. Many individuals report finding it empowering and helpful to use imagery to help them fight cancer themselves.

Start with relaxation. Then bring up an image of the cancer being destroyed by the treatment and the body's immune system. The cancer should be seen as weak and ineffective, whilst the treatment is seen as strong, powerful and friendly. Individuals find their own idea for this - perhaps firemen with hoses, 'pacman' type creatures, or knights on white horses. This can be done 10-15 minutes a day, 3 times daily.



Simonton et al (1978) stress the importance of the following:

- the cancer cells are seen as weak and confused
- the treatment is strong and powerful
- the healthy cells are able to repair slight damage caused by the treatment
- the body's natural defences - the white blood cells - are vast in number and overwhelm the cancer cells
- the white blood cells are aggressive and energetic, quickly targeting and destroying the cancer cells
- dead cancer cells are flushed out from the body in the normal way
- the individual should then imagine him/her self healthy and free of cancer, reaching their life goals



This technique can also be used to either **increase and strengthen or decrease the numbers of blood cells**, for instance increasing neutrophils in treating chemotherapy-induced neutropenia.



- Start with relaxation
- Take a few breaths, and then imagine yourself travelling down through your body into your bone marrow.
- Look and listen around you and notice what is happening - how the blood cells are created, what speed they're being created at, how many there are going into blood stream
- As you look around, notice a control system, and see how it works - how to speed up or slow down the process, how to increase or decrease the number of particular blood cells
- Imagine yourself altering this control system in order to decrease or increase the numbers of cells, or speed at which they're being created
- Notice the effect this has



If the aim is to increase in number of blood cells or speed of production....

- Notice the powerful and enthusiastic youthful energy of these new cells as they are released into the bloodstream
- See those cells purposefully setting off to do what they do, increasing in numbers and strength
- See any unhealthy cells as weak and confused
- See them gathering as great armies of cells at sites where they're needed, fulfilling their purpose, being added to as reinforcements continually arrive
- See yourself strong and healthy, achieving your goals



## Use of Colour

If using colour in imagery, do not use red to denote the cancer cells as this suggests strength and energy. Green or turquoise are good colours for healing, and blue for relaxation, but you can use any colour (other than red) that you associate with healing. See the [Colour Visualisation](#) handout

(<http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/ccount/click.php?id=173>)



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