

**Guided Visualisation – Cottage by the Sea**

**First make yourself completely comfortable.**

* Allow your body to sink into the floor.
* Let your legs and feet flop outwards.
* If you are lying on the floor, have your arms resting on the floor beside you.
* Enjoy the feeling of resting, of being completely supported.
* Let your eyes close.
* Make sure that your jaw is loose and that your teeth are not clenched together.
* Ensure your tongue is lying gently in the bottom of your mouth.
* Have a slight gap between your upper and lower teeth and let your lips be slightly parted.

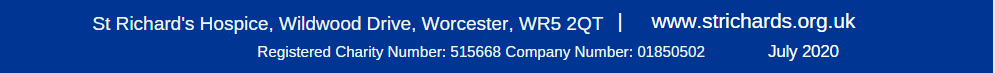
**Now become aware of your breathing.**

* Follow the breath as it comes into and goes out of your body.
* Do not try to control it in any way.
* Just observe the natural rhythm of your breathing.
* As you breathe out, imagine your whole body deflating, growing limp and heavy.
* Each time you breathe out, imagine that you are letting tension flow out of your body and mind.

**Now that your body is relaxed, take yourself in your imagination to the garden of a cottage by the sea.**

* You are sitting in a comfortable garden chair with plump cushions.
* All around you are the flowers of the cottage garden and you have a wonderful view out to sea.
* You sit in the warmth of the sun, listening to the lazy drone of insects and the sound of the gulls crying overhead.
* In the distance you hear the rhythmic beating of the waves on the beach below.

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**After a while, you get up from your chair and walk across the brilliant, sun-warmed grass of the lawn.**

* You make your way down a flight of steps that leads directly onto the wide, smooth, sandy beach.
* You are quite alone on your stretch of sand, although you can see tiny figures playing in the distance and hear a faint sound of their voices from far away.
* You take off your shoes, and walk over the pale, warm, dry sand down towards the water’s edge.
* Feel the warmth coming from the sand beneath your feet, feel the sand between your toes.

**As you get nearer to the sea, the sand becomes smooth, hard and damp.**

* Feel this new texture, the sand is perfectly smooth, with only here and there a tiny pink shell glinting in the light of the sun.
* Now you can come to the water’s edge.
* You watch the sparking foam running up the beach towards you, and you let the warm, shallow water flow around your ankles.
* You look out to sea, and notice a sail on the horizon.
* You follow it with your eyes as it moves round the headland and out of sight.
* Then you walk along the water’s edge, enjoying the rhythmic swish of the waves swirling around your ankles, the sunlight dancing on the water.

**Now you turn back towards the cottage.**

* You walk back over the smooth, hard sand.
* Over the pale, powdery sand.
* You go up the steps which lead back on to the lawn.
* The grass feels cool and refreshing to your warm, bare, sandy feet.
* You sit down in your chair again, allow your eyes to close and bask in the warmth of the late afternoon sun.

**Long Pause**

**Begin to concentrate once again on your breathing.**

* Imagine the tension leaving your body with every breath out and relaxation entering with every breath in.
* Start to bring yourself slowly back to the room where we are.
* In your own time open your eyes.

**Reference:** *Occupational Therapy in Oncology and Palliative Care*. Edited by J. Cooper 2006 John Wiley and Sons Ltd.